

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY

**OU\_220266**

UNIVERSAL  
LIBRARY





**OSMANIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARY**

355.0942/H97B. Accession No. 38704

Hutchison, G. S

British army. 1945.

book should be returned on or before the date last marked below.

---



*The*  
**BRITISH  
ARMY**

*By*  
Lt.-Col. Graham Seton Hutchison,  
D.S.O., M.C.

Foreword by  
Field Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery,  
G.C.B., D.S.O.

*Made and Printed in Great Britain*

**THIS BOOK IS PRODUCED IN COMPLETE  
CONFORMITY WITH THE AUTHORISED  
ECONOMY STANDARDS**



TAC HEADQUARTERS,  
21 ARMY GROUP.

2 July, 1945.

Foreword

Brave men seldom speak of the acts which have won them renown. Citations in the Gazette which record why His Majesty the King has been pleased to bestow the V.C. and other honours on his seamen, soldiers and airmen are read with pride and interest at the moment, but soon enter into the oblivion of past events and rarely obtain a mention in history. Only a few major events, like the Charge of the Light Brigade at Balaklava in 1854, Roberts' March to Kandahar, 1880, the sieges of Ladysmith and Mafeking 1899-1900, the death of Gordon at Khartum 1885, the battle and retreat from Mons in 1914, the evacuation of Dunkirk 1940, El Alamein, Arnhem, remain long in the public memory.

It is the aim of Lieut.-Colonel Hutchison, himself a distinguished soldier and commander of a machine-gun battalion in France in 1917-18 at the age of 27, to place before the youth of this country the brave deeds of the British Army, generally against odds, in past wars: including the second war with Germany, now happily brought to a victorious conclusion. In particular, he recalls the heroic actions of individuals who by their devotion to duty, regardless of death and danger, set an example for all time not only to their comrades and subordinates, but to the coming generations of the soldiers of the Empire.

There is a natural and untheatrical bravery in the British soldier, but this can certainly be developed and profitably increased by reading the deeds of his ancestors: there is far more in tradition than mere sentiment, as the men of every British regiment, battalion and battery well know. For these reasons I venture to recommend the reading of Lieut.-Colonel Hutchison's pages to the youth of the Empire.

B. L. Montgomery.

Germany.  
July 1945.

Field-Marshal.

## *Prologue*

It would be a vast library, indeed, which could embrace the whole history of the British army. I have endeavoured in this small volume, intended primarily for boys, to show how the army evolved and what it is, how it has fought during the past centuries, and how soldiers live in war and in days of peace. The method of presentation has been to borrow in some manner from the technique of cinematography. It is in regimental history—a closed book to the general reader and ignored by most learned historians—that you will find the full story of the British army. The late Sir John Fortescue compiled its history in a monumental work ; and, since the armed forces of the Crown were established on a national basis at the opening of the Great War in 1914, military operations have been generously chronicled by the Historical Section of the Committee of Imperial Defence, under the direction of Brigadier-General Sir James E. Edmonds.

In my story, the film, as it were, unrolls, and the reader will discover “close-ups” of scenes, incidents, and customs serving to illustrate the document as it proceeds. The photographic illustrations have been selected from the archives of the War Office, and are purposed to show the life of the British army as it is to-day ; while I have planned those in line so as to produce a visual commentary upon the text, portraying uniforms, weapons, equipment and their use through the ages. I only regret that in such limited space I could not introduce at least one of the epic exploits of every regiment and that many great names and events have been omitted. Throughout, I have sought to link the past with the present, to show that though the advance of science has wrought revolutions in the art of war, the British army remains unchanged, that is to say in its spirit, in those great qualities which have made our army both feared and loved in every part of the world. I have myself served as a Regular soldier in the King’s Own Scottish Borderers in Egypt, the Sudan, and India ; in the Militia (Special Reserve) of the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders, at home, in South Africa, and with the B.E.F. in France 1914–15 ; and with the Machine Gun Corps, a “New Army” formation, throughout all the principal battles on the Western Front between 1915–18. Some of the best days of my life have been spent with Cadets

in Rhodesia and India, and I have boys of my own. I think I may claim, therefore, to have the necessary qualifications to address this book to boys.

My aim is to show that the British army offers a very happy and interesting career for boys, for the best in physique and intelligence, in adventurous spirit and fine character, among those bred in these Isles. I want our boys to know how their forbears "played the man" with constancy and loyalty under hardship and in adversity, and not least how they behaved in the hour of victory and when, as peacemakers, they occupied the lands of former enemies. It is an inspiring story, for here, too, is the warmth of comradeship and of self-sacrifice without reward.

Many years ago, Field-Marshal Lord Napier wrote: "By reading you will be distinguished; without it abilities are of little use. A man cannot learn his profession without constant study to prepare, especially for the higher ranks. When in a post of responsibility he has no time to read; and if he comes to such a post with an empty skull it is then too late to fill it." Lecturing at Cambridge in 1939, General Sir Archibald (now Field-Marshal Lord) Wavell recalled lines he had seen written in the lecture hall of a French infantry school—"Only study of the past can give us a sense of reality, and show us how the soldier will fight in the future." He concluded his deeply informed lecture with these words: "A general may succeed for some time in persuading his superiors that he is a good commander: he will never persuade his army that he is a good commander unless he has the real qualities of one." That, of course, is true of the whole channel of command, not excluding Mr. Thomas Atkins, who at any time may find himself vested with authority, with the control and direction of crowds, with upholding his country's honour and authority in a foreign field.

This book is intended for every boy as one that he will treasure. I hope he will lock its stories in his heart, not secretly held, but to be proclaimed among his fellows in days of good and evil fortune, to ease the burden of monotony, and to encourage weaker brethren to tread valiantly, as British soldiers marched, to the end. If I am certain of nothing else in this world, I am sure the British army is, as it has always been, one of the greatest institutions for good in the world.

GRAHAM SETON HUTCHISON

*London, October, 1945,*

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The following authors, authors' representatives and publishers have kindly given permission to reprint material of which they control the copyright :

Mr. Edmund Blunden and Messrs. Richard Cobden for his poem *The Monnebeke Road*.

The Executors of the late Rupert Brooke and Messrs. Sidgwick and Jackson Limited for permission to use the poem *The Dead*.

Mr. Robert Graves for his poem *The Two Fusiliers* from "An Anthology of War Poems," published by Messrs. William Collins, Son and Company, Limited.

Major J. S. Hicks, for his poem *A Rose for Minden*, reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of Punch.

Mr. Geoffrey Howard, for his sonnet, *England*.

The Society of Authors as literary representatives of the Trustees of the late A. E. Housman, for the poems *Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries* and *When I Would Muse in Boyhood*.

Mrs. George Bambridge and Messrs. Methuen and Company, Limited, for extracts from *Shillin' a Day* and *Tommy*, from "Barrack Room Ballads," by the late Rudyard Kipling.

Mr. Adrian Bury for his poem, *England*.

Mr. Frederick L. Knowles for part of his poem *Laus Mortis* from the volume "Love Triumphant" published by Messrs. L. C. Page and Company, Boston.

Mr. L. G. Moberley for his poem *Commandeered*, reproduced by permission of the Proprietors of Punch.

I am greatly indebted to Brig.-General Sir J. E. Edmonds, C.B., C.M.G., for his generous kindness in reading the MS. and for his valuable suggestions.

I am grateful to Mr. Charles Paine for his admirable drawings of the coloured cover, end papers and in the text. The latter are intended to illustrate uniforms of the period rather than to be in every detail the exact representation of a particular Regiment or Corps.

The photographs are published by the courtesy of the War Office and the Ministry of Information.

G. S. H.



# CONTENTS

	PAGE
FOREWORD by Field-Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery, G.C.B., D.S.O. ... ..	3
THE SPIRIT OF THE ARMY ... ..	9
The standing Army—Legends in the making—Influence of Sea and Air Power—Anglo-Saxons, Celts, Cockneys—The Character of The Army.	
THE PAGEANT OF BATTLE ... ..	20
Firearms Introduced—Influence upon Dress and Equipment—Evolution of the War Correspondent—Old Customs Die Hard—Rifling Revolutionises War—Cavalry Transformed—Machine Guns become Masters of the Battle- field—Tanks are Born—Third Ypres and Arnheim.	
THE PAST PROVIDES THE PATTERN OF TO-DAY	33
Robert Bruce at Bannockburn—Origin of the Scottish Regiments—Royal Courage at Crécy and Agincourt—Victories at the End of a Day's March— Regimental Nicknames—"The Bravest Soldier"—The "Sporting Spirit"— Quebec and Douro—No Mean Inheritance—Corunna and Waterloo.	
THE MASTER OF ORDNANCE ... ..	48
The "Trayne of Artillerie"—Gibraltar, India, The Peninsular War—In the Great War—The Royal Engineers—The Royal Army Service Corps.	
INDIA AND AFRICA BREED AND MAKE MEN ...	61
From the East India Company—The Indian Mutiny—At the Khyber Pass —Chitral and the Tirah—A Playground Paradise—Gordon and Kitchener at Khartoum—South African War, 1899-1902.	
THE CAVALRY CHARGE AND ARMoured DRIVE —SCIENCE AND MEDICINE ... ..	71
"Going bald-headed for it"—British Cavalry in Action—The Royal Armoured Corps—High Adventure—Tank and Anti-Tank—The Royal Army Medical Corps.	
COURAGE OF THE GREAT WAR ... ..	82
Mons and First Ypres—"Hill 60," 1915: the Majesty of the Private Soldier —The Battle of the Somme, 1916—"Todger" Jones, V.C.—Tragedy and Farce—Military Music—England's Peerless Rifle Regiments.	
COMMAND AND LEADERSHIP ... ..	95
Organisation of the Army—Cardwell and Haldane—Cadets—O.T.C.— O.C.T.U.—Boy Soldiers—On Leadership—Command of the Army—Winston Spencer Churchill.	
THE ARMY OF 1939-45 ... ..	106
The Epic of Dunkirk and After—Opening the Way to Victory—Establish- ment of the 1944-5 Army—Morale.	
THIS WAS THEIR GREATEST HOUR... ..	114
Fine examples of Courage and Initiative on the World's Battlefields— Airborne and Parachute Troops at Arnheim—The Nation's Due to the British Army.	

# *DEDICATED*

to my friend

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR ERNEST SWINTON

K.B.E., C.B., D.S.O., M.A.

Commander of the Legion of Honour

Originator of the tanks

Colonel Commandant of The Royal Tank Corps,

1934-38

Chichele Professor of Military History Oxford University,

1925-39

Assistant Secretary to the Committee of Imperial Defence  
and the War Cabinet

To him, I am grateful for inspiration and teaching as a young man and in later years for excellent advice, but especially for that friendship without qualifications extending over more than thirty years of life which marks the true comradeship derived from military service.



## *The Spirit of The Army*

THE British army! The very thought of its exploits and the courage and endurance of its soldiers surely stirs the blood of every boy born of these islands. We have become so accustomed to the sight of soldiers in our streets, and for more than five years have read and listened to tales of their heroism—and have perhaps heard, too, of grievances—that it would be strange indeed if the younger generation, who in Field-Marshal Sir Bernard Montgomery's words "will have to play the major part in rebuilding the post-war world, and must be well-trained for the task," would not wish to know how the victorious British army developed, and from whence came its matchless spirit. Our army was often ridiculed at home, and held in contempt abroad, but it is possessed of unique and strange

traditions. Its valour has never been surpassed. No army in the world has ever been called upon to play so various a part. None has offered so gratifying a career to the brave and the adventurous.

The laureate of the British army, Rudyard Kipling, has nowhere struck a truer note than in the lines which crystallise the distinctive character of our soldiers:—

"... I have heard the Revelly,  
From Birr to Bareilly, from  
Leeds to Lahore,  
Hong Kong and Pershawah,  
Lucknow and Etawah."

Rich in experience of many men and many lands, of divers races and of icy cold and scorching heat; of service amid rocky mountains and of outposts on brown deserts far beyond civilisation; of great cities, teeming

with an alien population ; of long campaigns in curious lands and of hastily organised punitive expeditions ; of days in which, strongly trained for the task, life seemed to be an endless round of sport ; of bitter battles wherein the enemy gave no quarter, and of comrades who knew no fear—this has been the lot of the British soldier.

### *The Standing Army*

Since time immemorial, there has been in England an instinctive dislike and distrust of a standing army. In days gone by it was regarded as a menace to what we believed to be our inherited liberties. When the "divine right of kings" carried real power with it, the Kings of England, and, after the accession in 1603 of James VI of Scotland to the Tudor royal tradition, the rulers of the United Kingdom generally, appreciated when it was desirable to give way with generous grace to all just and strongly expressed popular demands. But the growing social and religious tension of the times led the Stuart Charles I to coerce the people by means of an army ; and, in order to suppress the monarchy, Cromwell formed the New Model Army of about 80,000 men, which, until the outbreak of the World War in 1914, was the finest in every respect in British history. Cromwell's government was essentially

military, the civil rights of the community being ignored when they clashed at any moment with army exigencies. With the Stuart Restoration, the army was disbanded, though Charles II, one of the greatest of our kings, would have liked to continue despotic rule but feared the temper of the people. Nevertheless, the British Regular Army, the only force responsible for the safety of the realm until the Volunteer Movement was initiated in 1859, may be said to date from the reign of Charles II, though some few of the oldest regiments may with justice claim to have been formed in the previous century.

Even after the Stuarts had been driven from the throne by a national rising which William III, son-in-law of King James II, came to England to lead, the people evinced the greatest jealousy of the soldiers he kept constantly under arms, to which was added a strong prejudice against an establishment governed by laws of a different character from those under which the civil community lived. Debates in Parliament at the time demonstrate the fears of a recurrence of any kind of military dictatorship, with the consequence that both officers and enlisted men were regarded with ill-favour, were under-paid and badly housed, a condition which, despite the succession of efforts by such

notable commanders as Raglan, Wolseley, Roberts, and Kitchener, continued until the outbreak of war in 1914 brought reforms.

Except during the periods between 1915-19 and subsequent to 1939, the British army was small ; and even under its two supreme generals, Marlborough and Wellington, never had a field strength of more than 50,000 men. At the time of our greatest Imperial expansion—when British rule exerted its peaceful and beneficial influence over hundreds of millions of warlike and often savage peoples, throughout Africa, in China, Burma and Malaya, and in the vast sub-continent of India, with ports and lines of communications to be furnished with garrisons in the Mediterranean, the Pacific, the Atlantic, and the Indian Oceans—our standing army was no more than 450,000 men, to which were added the Indian Army, Colonial forces, and local levies under British Officers and N.C.Os. Our reserves at home of Militia and Volunteers, mostly ill-armed and ill-trained, amounted in all to not more than the numbers of the Regular army. On the continent of Europe, conscription produced standing armies of several millions of men, readily concentrated at the point of conflict, with general staffs and training establishments efficient for the purpose of keeping the nation in arms.

### *Legends in the Making*

Though numerically so small and so widely dissipated over the surface of the globe, the reputation of the British army was always extraordinarily high. Our continental neighbours might boast of the exploits of the armies of the Emperor Napoleon or of Frederick the Great ; but there was nothing in the history of the great European armies that matched those heroic episodes in which, greatly outnumbered and facing fearful odds, British regiments had shown their invincible courage and had won their battles. The earlier story of the British army is, therefore, rather one of high adventure, of unquenchable ardour, and not least of glorious comradeship, than it is of great campaigning. Its traditions are vested in tales of the indestructible cohesion of the few against the many, and they have become legends.

Every one of our old regiments of the Foot Guards and of the Line, of the Cavalry, of Batteries of the Royal Regiment of Artillery and units of the Corps of Royal Engineers, celebrates a date in its calendar when its men seemed possessed of god-like powers, and, either with backs to the wall or charging headlong with bayonet, sword, or lance, met the challenge of our enemies and broke them on the battlefield. Other armies have vaunted their might: we have

gloried most when our soldiers have attained their victories as "a thin red line."

Our military pride is founded on such legends as that of "The Die Hards," the Middlesex Regiment, at Albuera in 1811, when, hard-pressed, the colonel called to his command: "Die hard, men, die hard!" Of the 570 officers and men who went into action only 160, many severely wounded, came out alive. Founded on legends, too, such as that of the Guards' square at Waterloo; of the 93rd Highlanders at Balaklava; of the fight at Delhi Gate by the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry; of the defence of Rorke's Drift by two subalterns—one a "sapper," the other of the South Wales Borderers—both of whom won the coveted V.C.; of the charge of the 21st Lancers at Omdurman; of the stand by the "old sweats" of what a German order called our "contemptible little army" at Mons in 1914; and of the epic of Dunkirk and of the Rifles dying at Calais.

Up to the time when it first enjoyed its might on the battlefields of France and Flanders in 1917, we trace the history of the British Army in the story of its old regiments. Following the Great War, urged both by misplaced hopes of perpetual peace and by parsimony, Parliament permitted the superb army which smashed the power of Imperial Germany in 1918 to vanish, though its profes-

sional officers had attained an experience of campaigning unknown since the days of Marlborough; and Kitchener had fashioned the machinery, from which, when the testing time came again, a new national army of might could be recreated. In the years between the two great world conflicts, experts, understanding the power and possibilities of mechanised arms and of scientific warfare, were establishing the means whereby, based securely upon imperishable traditions, new regiments and new corps, strangely equipped and amazingly trained, could be evolved to carry forward a national tradition whereby, though we are loath to fight, when it is forced upon us we throw all we have of brawn and brain and will into the struggle.

#### *Influence of Sea and Air Power*

Sea power has always been the main bulwark of what, in his immortal lines in *King Richard II*, Shakespeare described as:

"This fortress built by Nature for herself  
Against infection and the hand  
of war."

But, although through the audacity of our sea captains and by reason of our supremacy upon the ocean highways of the world, Britain was already expanding her Imperial dominion in the 17th century, it

was long since we had also asserted our power on the continent of Europe. There, in Plantagenet days, we had waged war; and, under both Tudor and Stuart monarchs had conducted a vivacious and sometimes aggressive diplomacy. In order to limit national expenditure upon the armed forces, William III was responsible for the policy of the "balance of power," by means of which, while fully maintaining our naval strength as a foil to the ambitions of the Spanish, the Dutch, and the French, we could subsidise the armies of our allies in Europe and send small expeditions to their aid.

The "Mutiny Act," which governed the Army until the passing of the "Army Act" in 1880, contained in its preamble a reference to this policy in the words "A body of forces should be continued for the safety of the empire and the preservation of the balance of power in Europe." These Acts required annual sanction by Parliament, and these words were retained until 1868, when they disappeared for ever. Yet, it was further stated in the "Mutiny Act" that the "raising or keeping of a standing army at home in time of peace, unless with the consent of Parliament, is against law," an indication of the unwillingness of Parliament right up till recent times to place an army at the disposal of any government at home.

Early in our history, however, we discovered that it was not sufficient to drive the fleets of the enemy skulking into their ports or to the bottom of the sea, but that we must also administer a rebuke to be remembered by a victorious campaign on land. The aggressors had been made to feel the sharpness of our swords and pikes and the deadly thrust of our bowmen's arrows when we carried our wars across the seas into the heart of the European mainland. At Crécy, Edward III won the greatest victory of his age. The warrior King Henry V, whom Shakespeare so delightfully pictured as "A lad of life, an imp of fame," at Agincourt won undying glory for the arms of England. Another man, John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, wrote his name upon the scroll of fame when he reduced the "exorbitant power of France." To his men he was affectionately known as "Corporal John." When he went to war, his enemies whispered fearfully: "*Malbrouk s'en va-t-en guerre.*" (Yet another Churchill caused Britain's enemies to whine in their gross guttural when his trumpet-blast pealed across the Rhine.) And, again, during the long years of the Peninsular War, Wellington exhausted Napoleonic power in distant Spain and Portugal, finally to defeat the tyrant of Europe at Waterloo.

In order to check the aggres-

sive ambitions of Imperial Germany in 1914, neither the awe-inspiring immensity of our battle fleets, nor the considerable armies of our allies—France, Russia and Italy—were sufficient. The deficiencies of military strength among our allies were to be found not only in numbers but in moral qualities. Building upon the traditions of our tiny army, we placed in France as the main theatre of war a force of upwards of 5,000,000 fighting men, while conducting at the same time formidable campaigns in Mesopotamia, East Africa, Palestine and on the Indian Frontier, and fully maintaining our garrisons elsewhere. The armies of the Russian Tsar collapsed, those of France were grievously shaken, while that of Italy fled from the field at Caporetto, to be rallied on the Piave by half a dozen British and French divisions. German historians have recorded that the defeat of Kaiser Wilhelm II's once victorious hordes was mainly due to the superior military qualities of the British army.

But in 1914 air power had been born. Our army went into the field with a few experimental observation planes that could boast of 80 horse-power and carry two men in calm weather. The army nursed aviation from swaddling clothes and when the war ended it had become a lusty warrior, with thousands of bombers, recon-

naissance and fighting planes. The Royal Flying Corps was a child of the army. In 1940, by means of the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, when the Belgian and French armies had capitulated, we succeeded in salvaging the remnants of our Expeditionary Force from the European mainland and saved Britain from invasion; and, in spite of appalling losses, we increased our naval strength and furnished an air force comparable with that of Germany. Yet, the stark reality of total war made it plain from the beginning that there could be no liberation for Europe, no victory for our arms, unless a British army became the spear-point of an attack upon the land forces of the Third Reich, and unless also that army be so equipped and trained as to be superior to the immense range of scientific and chemical armaments, contributed with such ruthless profligacy by perverted genius to German soldiers in the field.

#### *Anglo-Saxons, Celts, Cockneys*

The peculiar qualities of the British army—so stubborn in defence, so dashing and fierce in attack—are to be found in the native characteristics of Anglo-Saxon and Celt from whom our regiments are recruited. The English county regiments in defence have always defied their enemies. The 2nd Worcestershire, in October, 1914, mustering only



500 men, unwashed, haggard, their uniform in shreds, soaked with mud, closed the gap at Gheluvelt when our army seemed doomed; and again in 1918, they fought ferociously at Neuve Eglise when Ludendorff made his final bid to break through to the Channel Ports.

But the attack demands the dash for which the Celts are famous.

In 1898, Camerons and Sea-forths led the assault against Mahmud's *zariba* beside the Atbara River and slew 3,000 Sudanese warriors. It was the 51st (Highland) Division which stormed and captured the Beaumont Hamel redoubt in 1916 after it had resisted all assaults for weeks, and again was the spear-point of the grand and fearful onslaught across the Rhine, with the 15th (Scottish) Division close beside them. These examples recall the long years in which English troops fought against Scotsmen; and the tale of victory and defeat at Bannockburn, Flodden Field and Culloden reveals at some times the defiant tenacity of English soldiery and at others the irresistible impetuosity of the clansmen's charge. Wales, Ireland, and the Cockneys of London—one sixth of the total population of the United Kingdom—provide also their own individual contributions from which is made the mosaic of British military tradition. If the Cockney, so quick to learn, so easily assimilable, gave noth-

ing else but his inexhaustible wit and good humour, it would be an asset of priceless worth to the army, for, with truth, Napoleon observed that "Moral force is to physical as is three to one." A Cockney jest in the foul morass of Passchendaele, in the desperate defence of Tobruk, and in the grim adventure of D-Day on the Normandy beaches was worth many good men in the firing line.

#### *The Character of The Army*

There may be better men on earth than British soldiers, but we are an old people with a long history, and it would be difficult to find many men superior to those of the British Islands. They may grumble much, and shock some by the ribaldry of their speech. Sometimes they have been shaken, more than once guilty of excesses, and their discipline has been known to loosen. But these rare exceptions point to the rule that the British army has never failed to win the respect of its allies and the admiration of its enemies. Until the arrival of "battledress," it wore a uniform better known than any other wherever the pioneers of civilisation had trodden the world's great spaces, or had fought their way to the suppression of barbarous empires. Its junior officers had fronted dangers and carried responsibilities such as in other services only grey-headed generals had been called upon to face—as did Charles

Gordon, a captain of the Royal Engineers, commanding the "Ever-Victorious Army" in China and serving as Governor-General of the Sudan, an area larger than all Europe excluding Russia. Our old regiments have triumphed over savage people in all the ends of the earth, and within the British Commonwealth of Free Peoples, by their good manners and chivalrous bearing in alien lands, have knit close Moslems and Hindus, Arabs, Pathans and Tartars, Negroes, Malaysians and Polynesians. They have overcome every European rival against whom they have been pitted. Again and again, they have marched to victory through snows or the sweltering heat of the tropics. They have never failed save once, when they sought to arrest the westward march of another nation, kin to theirs, one of their own tongue and law, and then the fault was due not to them but to political blindness far from the surrenders at Saratoga and York Town across the Atlantic. "The British Army," wrote Sir John Fortescue, its historian, at the conclusion of his great work, "will be remembered best not for its countless deeds of daring and invincible stubbornness in battle, but for its lenience in conquest and its gentleness in domination."

Her seed is sown about the world.  
 The seas  
 For Her have path'd their waters.  
 She is known

In swamps that steam about the  
 burning zone,  
 And dreaded in the last white  
 lands that freeze.  
 For Her the glory that was  
 Nineveh's  
 Is nought; the pomp of Tyre and  
 Babylon  
 Nought; and for all the realms  
 that Caesar won—  
 One tithe of hers were more than  
 all of these.

And She is very small and very  
 green  
 And full of little lanes all dense  
 with flowers  
 That wind along and lose them-  
 selves between  
 Mossed farms, and parks, and  
 fields of quiet sheep.  
 And in the hamlets, where her  
 stalwarts sleep,  
 Low bells chime out from old  
 elm-hidden towers.

GEOFFREY HOWARD.

More than all else, the character of the British army has been infused by its regimental officers. The great field commanders, whom we came to know so well and for whom the whole nation has united in expressing its unbounded admiration, are typical of the breed. Gort, Alexander, and Leese served in the Brigade of Guards. Its strict discipline and flawless ceremonial drill; its apparently ferocious sergeant-majors, whose sharp orders resound above the roar of London's traffic anywhere within a mile of Wellington Barracks; its well-groomed, self-assured subalterns, somewhat imperious and disdainful

in demeanour; its superb, swaggering military bands, its strutting soldiers with well-creased trousers and straight backs, might suggest to a casual visitor to the Metropolis only a magnificent display of pomp rather than the troops which halted Albrecht of Württemberg at Langemarck and drove Rommel's Panzer Divisions from the Mareth Line. The Guards have been in the vanguard of our greatest battles; they are the finest fighting force in the world.

Wavell served for many years in the Black Watch before he swept away Graziani's African legions and then became Viceroy of India. Montgomery spent his youth as an officer of the Royal Warwickshire Regiment, and later for three years commanded its 1st Battalion. Dempsey graduated from the Royal Berkshire Regiment, in which he served for six years as a subaltern and for eleven as a captain before attaining his majority; Alan Brooke was a "Horse gunner" for ten years; and all our great commanders have always learned the art of handling men in regimental service.

It is often said that commissions from the ranks are a new notion, but they were given in the Crimea in 1859; and in 1886, when our army was very small, 53 sergeants became officers. Since the discipline of the British army resided most in the mutual

confidence and respect between its officers and the rank and file, there was always room in the officers' mess for the man who showed the qualities of leadership. General Sir Hector MacDonald, son of a Highland crofter, came from the ranks, being promoted in the Afghan War in 1879. Field Marshal Sir William Robertson, who commanded first the Staff College, and then became Chief of the Imperial General Staff in 1916 during the Great War, was a cavalry trooper. What Napoleon observed of his army was always true of ours, that "every private soldier carried a Field Marshal's baton in his knapsack." The way will always be open to any boy of character and intelligence to reach the highest pinnacle in the British Army. But since the indelible imprint of generations of its officers is upon the British Army, whose traditions are both the sure safeguard of millions of defenceless peoples and a sacred trust, it behoves every boy who would attain to non-commissioned and to more exalted ranks to pattern himself on its high standards.

It has ever been to the credit of Great Britain that the prospect of commanding a thousand or even a handful of fighting men has proved more attractive to the cream of our citizens than a seat in Parliament, a lucrative business appointment, or a comfortable niche in an office. Boys have

become soldiers because the instincts of leadership were strong in them and because enterprise and adventure captured their imaginations. Who have served the Empire best? Who have been the most successful in stilling racial strife, in conciliating the disaffected, in curbing the restiveness and in promoting the prosperity of a young community? Not the University professors nor the preachers; not the safe scribblers taunting in their news-sheets, the brave in their dangerous outposts, not the over-heated politicians in Westminster seeking notoriety, but those who have been bred in camps and bivouacs, who have lived their lives in arms, and whose knowledge of mankind has been of imperishable value to the world.

In the past those responsible for training British officers were too parsimonious to give effective aid, with the consequence that they taught themselves the use of ground and of cover through the sports of hunting and of shooting across the fields of Britain, or by chasing the fox in the vale of Peshawar, shooting ibex in the Himalayas, and spooring lions on the sands of the Sudan and tigers in the Indian jungle. They taught their men games and played with them.

In the constant association of the cantonment, British officers learned, not only how to command but how to govern,

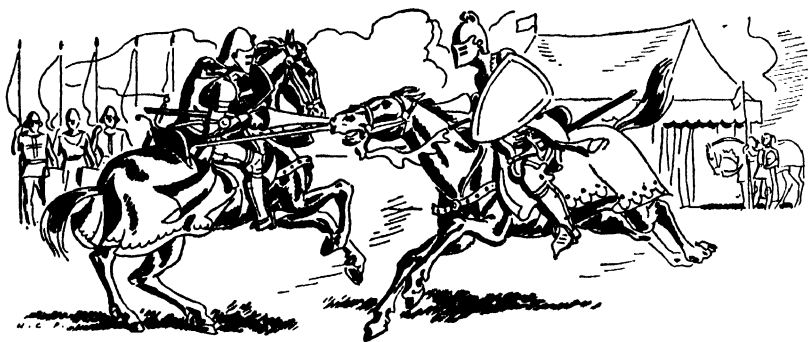
to think for themselves as also to obey orders, to organise as well as to lead. Men under thirty years of age have often governed provinces larger than their native land. They have added large tracts of country to the Empire, and have won the devotion of their inhabitants. These are the same men who, on short leave, may be guilty of a "binge" in Piccadilly and play practical jokes upon smug intellectuals at their meeting-houses. But, as Arthur Bryant so perfectly phrases it: "the cheerful subalterns on their way to race-meetings also lead through slime and desolation, undismayed, to the firing-line. Their elders, with grizzled, short-cropped hair and moustaches, are men of upright bearing, of a hearty liking for the pastimes of earth, tempered with a life-long mastery over self, who in the hour of danger are the very personification of constancy and of heroism in disaster." Both senior and junior officers are imbued with an intense, if silent, pride in their profession, in the traditions of the army, and in the men they command. And to the officers have been bound the rank and file in an indestructible comradeship, based on mutual confidence and respect. Man cannot be of the earth, earthy, facing the common dangers from Nature in her ugliest moods, and from foes, and fail to subordinate himself to the needs of his

comrades. There were seldom "class distinctions" in the British army such as have too often characterised Britain after the Industrial Revolution, but only the authority which is derived from a capacity to lead and the willing subordination of the led.

There is the same dignity in the Chelsea Pensioner with his medals of long-forgotten campaigns as there is in the retired general in his rough tweeds, presiding over a Rural District Council meeting, or in dress clothes on which are pinned his miniature decorations, taken once or twice a year from a drawer, attending his Regimental dinner. There are "peppery Colonels" with hidden wounds and agues gotten from inclement climates. There are old soldiers who cannot adapt themselves to the ways of peace. But there are also hundreds of thousands of men whose lives have been immeasurably enriched by training and service in the British army, whose memories of youthful adventure are rich stores upon which the mind may feed with content. "Old

soldiers never die, they only fade away." And, in fading, what could be more gratifying than to have the last flicker of the eyes and quiver of the lips lighted with the smile of remembrance that the best days of life here on earth had been spent in the British army?

In times of peace some men who are arrogant enough to call themselves philosophers always ridicule patriotism. That is because they have not experienced its power to dominate the other passions of mankind. The love of country is so all-embracing that it is not easily defined. Yet it is the one love which reconciles and unites all men living, the one love that honour can recognise, and the one issue for which honour itself can be laid aside. There are few loves on earth for which man is willing to die, but the love of his country is one of them. And to live for one's country? To render a good account to self, to one's fellow-countrymen, and to humanity? How better can this be accomplished than by service in the British army?



## *The Pageant of Battle*

THERE was a colourful pageantry and courteous ceremony in the conduct of our earlier wars in striking contrast to the drab camouflage and brusque manner of the modern battlefield. Fluttering standards, plumed knights on gaily caparisoned horses, brightly coloured uniforms, formed the pictures of our wars until Cromwell formed the New Model Army, based on his Ironsides, in 1644. At the Battle of Senlac, the mailed and helmeted knights, armed with swords, axes and lances, overthrew the stubborn English hus-carles of Harold and the half-armed rustics; and Richard the Crusader's troops in the Holy Land were so bolstered with padding and heavy with armour that they were hardly mobile, if proof against the attacks of the light horsemen of the East.

### *Firearms Introduced*

At Crécy, the French accused the English of the introduction of the "atrocities" of fire-arms, for cannons were used, and a French knight ordered that any prisoner so armed should instantly be put to death for breaking the rules of war. This same argument has been used many times since. The use of "Dum-dum," soft-nosed bullets, has been alleged on both sides in recent wars. The employment of gas is regarded as inhuman, and is prohibited by an International Hague Declaration. The charge against the English of introducing an atrocity weapon was, however, merely an excuse for defeat, for the battles of Crécy, Poitiers and Agincourt were won by our superb archery. Until the development of the musket, cannon and gunpowder—a Chinese

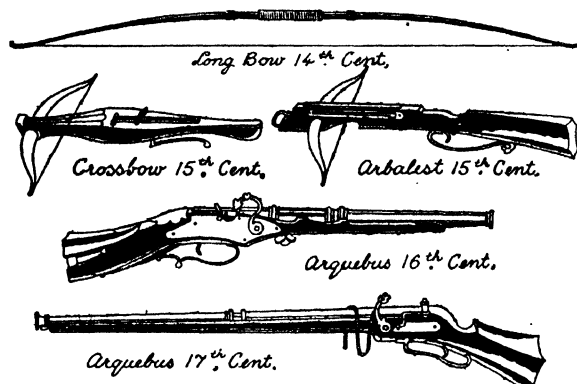
invention first introduced into Europe in the early 13th century—English bowmen had triumphed for two centuries on every battlefield in which they were engaged. Henry VIII made practice with the bow compulsory, but by the close of the 16th century archery was officially abandoned. In Cromwell's New Model Army, there were twice as many matchlocks as pikes, and by the end of the century, flintlocks had become the fire-arm of foot-soldiers, the ball fired weighing  $1\frac{1}{4}$  ounces. Cromwell's famous advice to his soldiers illustrates the most vexatious military problem of the day: "Put your trust in God, and keep your powder dry."

Though the introduction of fire-arms took much of the pageantry from war, its chivalry lingered for centuries; for instance, when opposing armies were arrayed confronting one another, the attacking general, with gallant ceremony, would usually invite the defender to fire the first shot. In the hands of even a puny soldier, the "Brown Bess"—a name attached to the standard weapon dating from the musket introduced in the reign of Queen Elizabeth until superseded by the rifle—could overthrow the armoured horseman; but fire, owing to the inaccuracy of the early weapon and the length of time required for reloading, was usually reserved until almost point-blank range,

when the atrocious wound inflicted usually proved fatal. Inaccuracy of fire led inevitably to the mass formation tactics of infantry. They would pour volleys into one another, and then come to close quarters with the short sword and bayonet. Most of the battlefield manœuvre was undertaken by cavalry, whose arms now consisted of the sword and pistol; while horses were selected for speed rather than for a capacity to carry an armoured knight, who had to be lifted into the saddle by means of a rope and pulleys by several strong men. It is recorded that at the Battle of Kuisyingen in 1636, the foot soldiers succeeded in firing only seven shots in eight hours; while, even at Waterloo, a volley from one side of a British square only hit two of the charging French cavalrymen. The artillery depended for its effect upon ricochets, and not on direct hits.

#### *Influence upon Dress and Equipment*

The tactics pursued, therefore, were to build up a firing line from musketeers, as densely packed as possible, lying, kneeling and standing, and to tear a big rent in the enemy's line; or, while the enemy was reloading, to advance to closer range in order to use naked steel, while the cavalry created a diversion on a flank or attempted to penetrate the



The evolution of Small Arms is illustrated chronologically from the Long Bow and Arquebus—

breach already made. As an additional defence, the infantry furnished stout stockades and ditches to hold up and trap the cavalry. These correspond very closely to the anti-tank ditches and "dragon's teeth" of the Maginot and Siegfried lines; and armour, recreating manoeuvrability after the stagnation of trench warfare, has now entirely replaced cavalry in the mechanised battle of our age. The archer could discharge twelve to fifteen arrows while the musketeer was loading his piece, during which he took cover behind the pikes of the infantry. Pikes were often eighteen feet long, inconvenient to handle by men in close formation, and the breaking of several in a determined cavalry charge would throw the whole line into confusion. The musketeer was so over-weighted with accoutrements, that it was said that "after a march of fifteen miles, the soldier is

more ready to sleep than to fight." His musket weighed about 12 lbs.; he carried also a forked rest, a stream of bandoliers, priming horn, sword, plug bayonet, full-skirted coat, and great broad-brimmed hat. The pikemen were loaded with helmets, pistol, breast- and back-plates, tassets, swords and long pikes.

Cromwell had aimed at an efficient fighting machine; but, by the 18th century, splendour on parade was aimed at rather than the provision of serviceable equipment. This tendency to produce an army of peacocks rather than of panthers persisted until 1896, when Kitchener, man of prophetic vision until the day of his death, trained his army for the reconquest of the Sudan in uniforms and with equipment designed for desert warfare. Our methods of recruiting the Regular Army under a voluntary system continued until



compulsory service was introduced on 27 January, 1916, during the Great War.

Conscription in peacetime was introduced in 1939, but the voluntary system had been largely responsible for the retention of the magnificent uniforms, scarlet, blue, and green, in which British soldiers appeared on all occasions except when engaged in field training, on manoeuvres, or in campaigning. It was long held by authority that, since the profession of soldiering was generally held in public contempt, Tommy Atkins would cut a better figure in the eyes of the girls, if his fine manhood be well set-off in resplendent attire in contrast to the drab clothing of his civilian counterpart; and in consequence, smart uniforms would encourage recruiting. There was something

in the notion, admirably conveyed in Kipling's lines:—

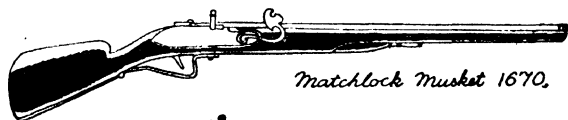
"We aren't no thin red 'eroes,  
nor we aren't no black-  
guards too,

But single men in barricks,  
most remarkable like you;  
An' if sometimes our conduct  
isn't all your fancy paints,  
Why, single men in barricks  
don't grow into plaster  
saints.

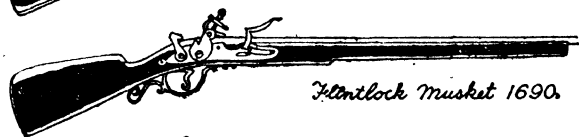
While it's 'Tommy this,'  
an' 'Tommy that,' an'  
'Tommy, fall behind,'

But it's 'Please to walk  
in front, sir,' when  
there's trouble in the  
wind."

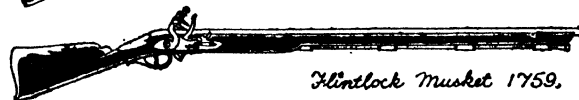
Frederick the Great of Prussia devised most of the models imitated by our own Hanoverian Kings, introducing them to increase the martial appearance of his troops. There was something truly magnificent about our splendidly mounted and



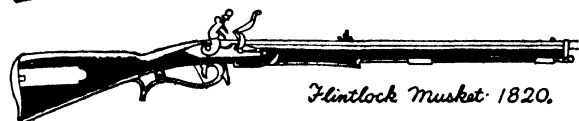
*Matchlock Musket 1670.*



*Flintlock Musket 1690.*

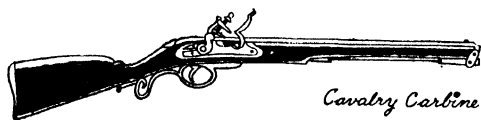


*Flintlock Musket 1759.*

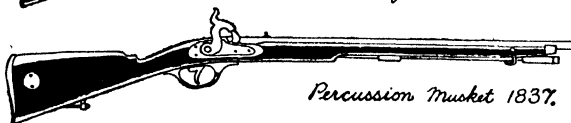


*Flintlock Musket 1820.*

—to the Infantry  
weapons used by  
the men of Marl-  
borough and Wel-  
lington, as here.



*Cavalry Carbine 1830.*



*Percussion Muzzle-loader 1837.*



*Martini-Henry Rifle 1876.*

*The introduction of the Rifle revolutionised tactics, developing with our Indian Frontier and Colonial wars to—*

brilliantly attired cavalry, our Foot Guards and Infantry of the Line, in their plumed helmets and shakos, scarlet tunics, pipe-clayed equipment, and gold ornaments and multi-coloured facings; while our Scottish Highland regiments have always evoked tremendous applause in their feather bonnets with white or red hackles, scarlet doublets, kilts and sporrans, jewelled ornaments and gaily coloured hose-tops with scarlet flashes and white spats. The armies of Marlborough and Wellington, marching and fighting in mud and rain and dust, must have suffered agonies; but so long as his men had sixty rounds of ammunition, Wellington did not care whether his army wore grey, blue, brown or red. During the Indian Mutiny, stocks and coat-tails were cut off for easier movement; and, in the Crimea, the Army went almost barefoot, but not from preference. But all lapses from Dress Regulations were con-

sidered to be almost indecent, a fact which recalls an amusing anecdote, which was sketched in *Punch*, of an officer, discovering that one of his men has a button undone, exclaiming with horror: "You're half naked, man!"

#### *Evolution of the War Correspondent*

All the contemporary artists portrayed soldiers in battle perfectly attired with every detail of equipment in its correct position. But the Press, becoming a recognised factor in military operations, with the appearance of such great artist-journalists as the pioneers, Melton Prior and Caton Woodville, whose enthralling pictures often decorate the walls of our inns, began to show how soldiers really appeared in action. Mr. W. H. Russell, of *The Times*, was the first war correspondent, being present in the Crimea and Indian Mutiny. In addition to war correspondents, the more im-

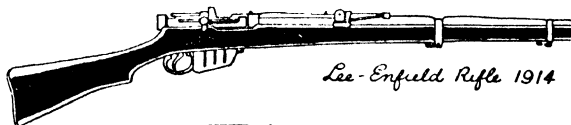
portant newspapers retain their own military correspondents in times of peace, of whom the most distinguished have been Colonel Repington, Captain Cyril Falls, Major-General J. F. C. Fuller and Major Shepherd. In early Victorian days, army officers were carefully instructed in landscape drawing as an aid to reconnaissance reports, and among the artists holding posts at the military academies was the famous painter, David Cox.

During 1914-18, war correspondents became an important link between field commanders and the public at home, contributing, under censorship, an endless stream of accounts of every phase of military activity. The results of their work are to be found in the vast collection of drawings and photographs in the Imperial War Museum, London, where it is perhaps difficult to believe that the mud-smeared warriors under steel helmets, in their goat-

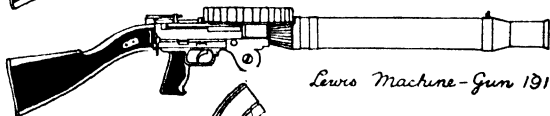
skin jerkins and waterlogged rubber waders, are the same men who so splendidly appeared, in bearskins and scarlet tunics, on guard at Buckingham Palace. Sir William Orpen, R.A., who painted every aspect of the Western Front from 1915 to 1918, as an official artist, immortalised his name as one who deeply felt and interpreted the spirit of the British soldier, as individually also did Nevinson, Sargent and Kennington. A visit to the Museum is an inspiring adventure. Charles Cundall's graphic oil paintings brilliantly illustrate the present war. Muirhead Bone, a draughtsman of singular distinction, has been an official artist in both the German wars. To the journalists and artists and photographers who now accompany troops into action, have been added film camera-men and the commentators of the B.B.C.

The Public Relations Department in the War Office has

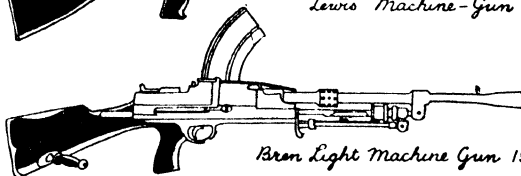
—the Magazine Rifle, in the two great wars against Germany to be supplemented by automatic, various quick-firing weapons.



*Lee-Enfield Rifle 1914*



*Lewis Machine-Gun 1917.*



*Bren Light Machine Gun 1939.*

become an important institution for recording every phase of training and of war, and it is responsible also for providing information and facilities to the Press, as also for keeping next-of-kin acquainted with casualties and prisoners-of-war.

### *Old Customs Die Hard*

The *esprit de corps* of British regiments was so much bound up with distinctive uniforms that, even to serve the requirements of mechanised warfare, there was great reluctance to depart from what had been traditional. Although the army, stationed and campaigning in India and Africa, was issued with khaki service uniforms, and, soon after the conclusion of the South African War in 1902, pioneered the healthy and practical habit of wearing shorts for those engaged in active physical life, smart "walking-out" dress was also retained until August, 1914. The traditional scarlet of the Foot Guards and Infantry regiments, green of the light infantry of the King's Royal Rifle Corps, the Rifle Brigade, and the Cameronians, and blue of the Royal Horse Guards—"The Blues"—and the Royal Regiment of Artillery, made a brave show on ceremonial occasions. After the Armistice in 1918, only the Guards, Horse and Foot, returned to the splendour of their scarlet or blue, though a half-hearted and unpopular attempt was made

to recapture something of the army's past glory at the time of the Coronation of King George VI by dressing it in blue tunics and trousers with a peaked cap. Nevertheless, some regiments have clung to distinction in dress, as, for example, the unusual placing of buttons on a Guardsman's tunic, the black flash sewn to the back of the collar of the Royal Welch Fusiliers in commemoration of the pigtail hanging from the back of the powdered wig; and the regimental badge, a sphinx, worn both front and back of the head-dress of the Gloucestershire Regiment, a distinction granted after the Battle of Alexandria in 1801 when, attacked in front and rear simultaneously, the rear rank faced about and beat off the enemy. In January, 1916, during a violent German attack near Givenchy, the Gloucesters, similarly attacked, faced the rear rank about and held their ground.

### *Rifling Revolutionises War*

The development in fire-arms was more rapid during the fifty-year period between 1850 and 1900 than during the preceding five centuries. Rifling is the very essence of the modern firearm of all calibres. The first to be used was the Minié rifle, used by the British army in the Crimea, though it was superseded before the close of the campaign. Among the

pioneers of modern small-arms are specially to be noted the names of Greener, Whitworth, Snider, Martini-Henry, and Lee-Metford; and the evolution of 20th-century infantry weapons and cannon was concerned with the improvement in rifling, methods of loading and firing, and the form of ammunition. These changes showed far greater acceleration in the small British standing army as compared with the huge Continental conscript armies, with the important result that our soldiers were better equipped than were their neighbours on the mainland of Europe. The British Army was the first to be furnished with the breech-loading magazine rifle, enabling rapid aimed fire up to a range of 800 yards.

The introduction of this new rifle caused a revolution, in tactics and in equipment and dress. To replace the close formations and dense masses of infantry fighting shoulder to shoulder, slowly delivering inaccurate volleys and prepared always to receive a cavalry charge, the foot soldier proceeded into battle in thin skirmishing lines, advancing in a crouched position, taking advantage of cover, presenting the appearance rather of a supplicant seeking favours of a tyrannical master than of a resolute challenger to an enemy whom he was determined to rout and slay.

The object of such tactics in

the attack was so to build up the firing line on a position of vantage that it would then obtain superiority of fire over the enemy. In our many campaigns on the Indian Frontier and in Africa, our khaki-clad men in their light equipment successfully mastered their dangerous and skilful enemies by means of the highly developed use of this new weapon. During the South African War, 1899-1902, the Boer Commandos, hunters all, demonstrated that we had something further to learn about the art of scouting and of making use of ground as cover. Their sharp-shooters, well-concealed mounted infantry and gunners, taught the British army some bitter lessons many times over, notably at Colenso, the Modder River, and at Magersfontein. But it was Baden-Powell, the hero of the famous siege of Mafeking, who, more than any other, brought skill in scouting to a fine art.

### *Cavalry Transformed*

Highly concentrated rapid infantry fire, combined with breech-loading field and horse artillery, sounded the death knell for the cavalry arm. No longer could mounted troops charge infantry positions with impunity. The sword and the lance became obsolete as weapons except against tribesmen armed with spears and the clumsy *jezail* fired by the Afridi warrior. But the British

army was slow to learn the lesson. Although our cavalry regiments were never employed after 1914, save once or twice in futile forays, they were retained intact behind the lines, except for periodical visits as dismounted men to the trenches, throughout the Great War. The foraging of horses alone, including those of artillery and transport, occupied more shipping space and represented a greater tonnage than did the supply of ammunition. Only in Palestine, under Allenby—a cavalryman himself, as were Haig and many of our senior commanders—did the cavalry really do justice to their arm.

It was the machine gun which finally changed military thought about the efficacy of horsed soldiers in modern war. Nevertheless, it was because of their love of horses that many officers and men had been attracted to military service. Hunting, polo, tent-pegging, gymkhanas, fitted well into routine life at home and abroad. The cavalry served as a focus for horsebreeding, for which England and Ireland were regarded throughout the world as producing the finest blood stock. In our cavalry regiments, soldiering and the grandest sports seemed to be perfectly blended. There was much heartburning when the Army Council decided to mechanise the cavalry, all excepting the Royal Scots Greys and the Horse Guards,

who later also succumbed. Dashing young subalterns and troopers, to whom field sports had been the sole lure since their earliest boyhood, found themselves transformed into armoured units, riding as chauffeurs and greasers, gunners and mechanics, in petrol-driven, steel-cased vehicles on caterpillars. Though retaining their ancient titles—Hussars, Lancers, and Dragoons, the Cavalry became units of the Royal Armoured Corps; but, as a compensation for the loss of horse-flesh, they could now manoeuvre again on the battlefield, while their rôle, from being that which usually succeeded infantry action, evolved into that of leadership, armoured regiments often thrusting deep into enemy territory far ahead of the infantry.

#### *Machine Guns become Masters of the Battlefield*

The idea of the machine gun was of most ancient origin, but nothing of the kind was introduced into the British army until the Zulu War of 1879, where we employed two Gatling guns with some success. Meanwhile, both in Europe and America, various inventions for the automatic projection of a stream of bullets were brought into use. Both the War Office and Parliament itself were, however, sceptical about the value of machine guns, and debate raged as to whether such weapons should

replace field artillery or be handled by the infantry. In the early days they were cumbersome and heavy, ammunition supply presented difficulties, while the mechanism was subject to faults not easily overcome.

On the other hand, rifle practice in the British regular army and among members of the volunteer force and cadet companies had reached a stage of the highest efficiency. Preparatory schools took part in miniature range competitions; the Ashburton Shield was keenly contested by senior schoolboys on the superb ranges at Bisley; and matches organised by the National Rifle Association under the army were great annual events in the national life. The contest for the King's Prize, open to entrants throughout the British Empire, attracted visitors from every part of the world.

Indeed, so deadly was the rifle fire of the B.E.F. at Mons, Le Cateau, and First Ypres, that the British army of some 80,000 men held up 130,000 Germans expectant of victory by sheer weight of numbers. But, within a few weeks of the opening of war, the superb riflemen, so assiduously trained and nurtured, had begun to disappear, and the hastily mobilised reinforcements, lacking training, were no match for the vast number of machine guns in German hands. More than all others, Lloyd George,

both as Prime Minister and Minister of Munitions, put all his dynamic energy into equipping our infantry with machine guns. The type used by the British army was that evolved from the inventions of Hiram Maxim. The original Maxim gun of the B.E.F. was replaced early in 1915 by a close adaptation, named the Vickers-Maxim gun, shortened to Vickers alone. Almost simultaneously, an automatic rifle, known as the Lewis, was produced. But experts at the School of Musketry, Hythe, had already been experimenting with the fixed platform Maxim gun for the projection of overhead covering fire.

After the formation of the Machine Gun Corps in October, 1915, machine guns were brigaded in companies, and came to be grouped for offensive action in batteries of four or eight guns for the purpose of indirect harassing and barrage fire—novel tactics of deadly effect, introduced by the British army and copied only in the later stages of the war by the Germans. As the number of Vickers guns increased, machine gun battalions were formed for each division, with a complement of sixty-four guns and possessed of immense fire power when well disposed and handled on the battlefield. It is recorded that, when the Germans had breached our lines and Ludendorff was thrusting for the capture of the Channel

ports, the 33rd Battalion M.G.C., fighting a desperate rearguard action alone, on a front of three miles in the Battle of the Lys, April, 1918, repulsed the attacks of more than seven German divisions with most bloody losses.

Our early assault battles at Neuve Chapelle and at Loos had shown that infantry attack against German entrenched positions, mainly held by machine gun posts, usually carefully camouflaged, and safe in loopholed concrete "pill-boxes" against all but a direct hit from heavy artillery, were very costly and almost suicidal. On the 1st July, 1916, when the great battle of the Somme opened, the British army suffered 60,000 casualties, mostly from machine gun fire. One example was in the 8th Division, where within three hours of zero hour the losses amounted to 218 out of 300 officers, and 5,274 out of 8,500 men who had gone over the top. In none of the battles of the war of 1939-1945 has the carnage approached that of the Somme and Third Ypres.

### *Tanks are Born*

To overcome the mastery of the battlefield by the machine gun it was necessary to produce an armoured, moving fortress, sufficiently heavily armed to knock out the German machine gun nests. Under a system of planned perjury, the tank was perfected near

Thetford, Norfolk. The idea was developed in the mind of Colonel, now Major-General Sir Ernest Swinton, a sapper, who took charge of the secret experiments and training of crews behind barbed wire, from which, during many weeks prior to the first operational employment of these terrifying weapons, no leave was given.

To defy curiosity and the attention of spies, it was put abroad that we were innocently manufacturing water tanks for our troops in the East, from which this new engine of war, to become the master of every battlefield, took its name. The modern tank is a refinement in strength of armour, speed and gun-power, but the essential principles are those evolved by Swinton and his colleagues, greatly encouraged by Mr. Winston Spencer Churchill, then presiding over the Admiralty.

To bolster up the fast fading fortunes of the Battle of the Somme, on 15th September, 1916, the first tanks went into action against the German High Wood position which had defied capture by many divisions since mid-July. The vital secret of the tank had been kept for months by hundreds of people in the know, by copious and imaginative lying. Rather than wait until we had sufficient quantities with which to exploit a great victory, only 49 tanks were used. But if the surprise of the new weapon



was thereby lost, it achieved the objective sought, namely, capacity to break down barbed-wire entanglements and destroy the machine gun nests which had held up our infantry assaults with such grievous losses.

During their first battle, an observing airman sent back this message: "A tank is walking up the High Street of Flers with the British army cheering behind." War correspondents ransacked their dictionaries for words with which to describe this new all-British destroyer of Germany. It was termed "Diplodocus Galumphang," "Polychromatic Toad" and "Flat-footed Monster"—"It stamped down a dugout as though it were a wasp's nest"—"It smashed trees like matchwood, and it performed the most astonishing feats of agility as it advanced, spouting flames from every side." Journalism was as triumphant as was the British infantry.

Thus, in two years of actual warfare, the British army had uniquely evolved a new machine gun fire technique, using batteries for the overhead lifting barrage, to be imitated by almost all the armies of the world. It had also produced an entirely new weapon enabling the stagnation of battlefield and trench warfare to be brought to an end, while restoring to commanders the manœuvre power which they had lost when cavalry fell into disuse.

We are a peace-loving people, and while our enemies have assiduously prepared for war, we have played our games, a very delightful national habit, but twice in a lifetime proven to be unpractical and very costly. Nevertheless, under actual stress of war, we have always in the end triumphed with better soldiers and weapons, and superior generalship and tactics, a remarkable testimony to the hitherto underpaid professional officers and soldiers beneath whose veneer of indifference have always been the sterling qualities of zeal and study.

Two other factors served further to eliminate all the pageantry from war and to reduce its colour to a drab monotony. The aeroplane necessitated the camouflaging of gun positions, trenches and ammunition dumps, and the British army sank literally into the ground, except when it "went over the top" to the assault. But even the faces of men were to be obscured also by the introduction of the gas mask, superseded by the box-respirator. British soldiers thus equipped looked like figures from a nightmare. Gone were the plumed knights and the gay cavaliers, gone the resplendent scarlet and green infantry and the blue gunners decorated with gold lace. No more the dancing pennants of the lancers and the fluttering Colours, no more the kilted

Highlanders and Generals in their cocked hats. Only the maroon berets of the Glider Pilot Regiment, the black of the Royal Armoured Corps, and the green of the Commandos, remained as a splash of distinctive colour on the battlefield, while our most victorious commander, Montgomery, campaigned in a beret, a woollen pullover and a pair of slacks.

### *Third Ypres and Arnhem*

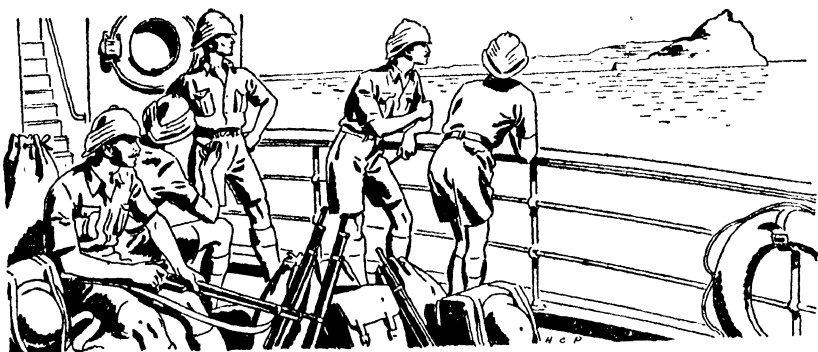
Yet modern battle is possessed of its own peculiar pageantry. "Third Ypres, 1917"—here was a stupendous spectacle. The thunderous roar of guns was as if giants beat ten thousand tomtoms. The chatter of machine guns throbbed maniac melody to the wild disharmony of blasting masonry, crashing trees and the ceaseless clang of metal. Always from the gloom of smoke, staccato voices shrieked "Hell! . . . God! . . . *Kamerad!* . . . *Mein Gott!* . . ."—while others, sinking in the soggy slime, choked with gas, wailed "Water. . . . For Christ's sake give me water." The solemn procession of men, mules, horses, limbers, streamed eastwards across the broken tracks, stricken by great gusts of fire.

In the forefront of the pageant, mud-clothed men in gasmasks, wielding flames from the jet in their hands, staggered through deep pits, suffused with barbed wire, cursing the

universe. "O give 'em Hell! . . . my rifle's jammed! . . . They'll come in a jiffy. The swine, the Boches, the Huns!" And on the other side they whispered hoarsely, "*Sie kommen!*"

Then, tens of thousands of men were locked in death grips. The curtain of night came down. The sky behind became jagged with the quick-cut flash of bursting cordite, and red and luminous, gashed by gunfire. Soaring rockets, red, green, and white, wildly called their SOS signals to the sweating gunners in the rear. Then followed the fantastic ballet of flying limbs, its own impressive chorus chanting the hymn of the wounded—"Water, for God's sake give me water!"—to its world-shaking orchestra of shell fire, machine guns, and bombs.

On D-day, at Caen and Falaise, at Arnhem and on the Rhine, war has provided the British army with pageantry on an even greater scale, with thundering tanks and almighty bombing from the air to enhance the drama. Then, see the Guards' Division and British Infantry, spick and span, faultlessly marching, erect and proud, through the streets of liberated Brussels; and hear the drums and fifes, the skirl of pipes, as heralds of victors in vanquished Germany! Time marches on, but the spirit of the British army is unchanged



## *The Past Provides the Pattern of To-day*

THOUGH the records are few, the exploits of soldiers of these islands in the early days make enthralling reading. We rely for the narratives on the chronicles of Holinshed and of Froissart, and upon the historical plays of Shakespeare, as profound a student as he was great poet and playwright. The famous tapestry of Bayeux, pictures in the British Museum, and at Windsor Castle also give a view as to how men fought.

### *Robert Bruce at Bannockburn*

Some of the noblest deeds of valour and endurance to be found in all the human story were wrought in the deadly strife between the English and the Scots, whose descendants now engage only in chivalrous emulation of each other's

bravery on the battlefield. It is difficult to find records of warfare in what are aptly termed the "dark ages" in the early 14th century, when the light of learning disappeared except where it was sedulously tended and kept burning by priests in cloister and cell. These were the men least likely to compile an intelligent account of military affairs. But a famous English knight, Sir Thomas Grey, taken prisoner by the Scots, beguiled the tedium of two years' captivity in Edinburgh Castle by writing a chronicle of his own times. The narrative has never been translated from the original Norman French, and it contains a vivid account of the Battle of Bannockburn, 1314.

In the legends which cluster

round the name of Robert Bruce, we see him fighting single-handed against dense hordes, listening in Highland glens to the bay of blood-hounds on his track, and watching the patience of the spider weaving the web with which to entrap its prey. Stirling was the key to Scotland, and thither, in June, 1314, King Bruce brought his foot soldiers to do battle with Edward II, in whose train marched 30,000 horsemen and a host of savage marauders gathered from Wales and Ireland to break an ancient enemy.

Two different systems of fighting were brought once again face to face, the English with their archers and men-at-arms, but as yet chiefly relying on their horsemen; and the Scots drawn up in their "schiltroms"—solid squares and circles—protected by pits and pointed stakes. At the outset, the English were dispirited, when one of their knights, Henry de Bohun, bore with his lance on Robert Bruce as he was riding unconcernedly along the front of his army. Mounted on a pony and armed only with a battle-axe, the Scottish king warded off his opponent's spear, and then cleft his skull with so terrible a blow that the handle of the axe was shattered in his grasp. The results of the duel between opposing knights, a feature of battle in this era, had a profound effect upon morale.

The English archers then opened the battle by raking the Scottish squares, but Bruce drove at them a small body of horse held in reserve for the purpose. A charge by the English men-at-arms on a narrow front was met with stubborn resistance; and the horsemen pressing behind threw the whole English battlefront into confusion. The pike of each Scot in the front rank was firmly planted in the ground beside his knee, and the glittering points of the standing ranks combined to form an inflexible wall of steel. Against the schiltroms, the English horsemen hurled themselves only to be impaled, and the cavaliers to be dragged from the saddle and despatched by sword and dagger. "The horses that were stickit," wrote an exultant Scot, "rushed and reeled right rudely."

Panic seized the English army and the motley hosts assembled for the sacking of Scotland, amounting in all to not less than 50,000 men, against whom the forces of King Robert numbered at most 17,000. King Robert had admirably disposed his troops, and when after their reverses the English sought to leave the battlefield, they found their way effectually blocked by bogs in their rear, in whose mire and pools the confused mob of living and dying floundered helplessly. No smoke of powder veiled the

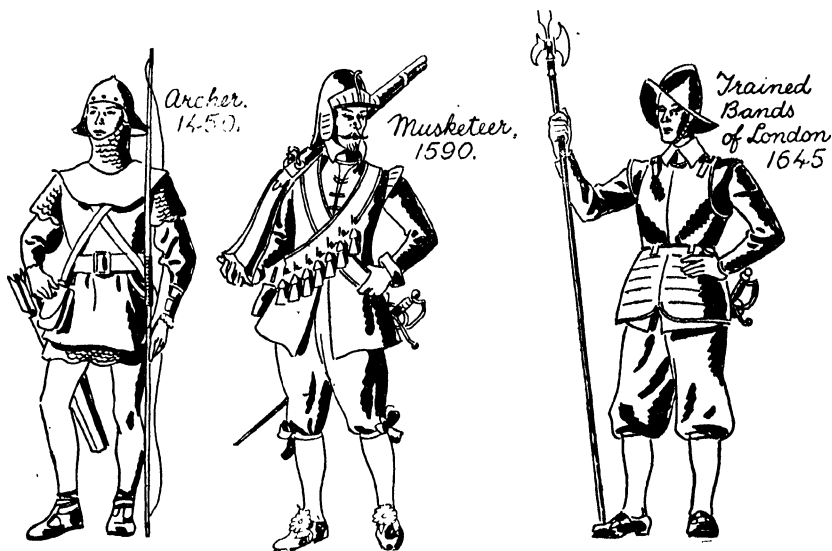
hand-to-hand horrors of that brilliant summer afternoon as the Scots bore in upon the sweating, vanquished enemy in the work of butchery. The flower of the English *puissant chevaliers* had been slain, together with no less than 700 gentlemen of lower degrees entitled to coat-armour. But in the hour of victory the King of Scots bore himself right nobly, for he was gentle and considerate in his treatment of prisoners; he declined to exact any ransom from his enemies, and the bodies of the foremost nobility were sent to England under escort for honourable burial.

#### *Origin of the Scottish Regiments*

The alliance between Scotland and France, dating from the 14th century, brought thousands of Scots to serve in the endless wars which troubled mediæval Europe. Among the most staunch followers of Jeanne d'Arc had been a body of Scottish knights. A Scottish corps of 12,000 foot was sent to France in 1659, "armed and clothed in antique fashion in mail shirts and steel helmets . . . playing on bagpipes and hautbois when going into battle." A regiment entitled "Les Gardes Ecossois" was formed in 1641; and history shows its endurance up till as late as 1839. In the Highlands, also, independent companies had been raised in 1624 as a species of military constabu-

lary for preserving order, especially after the fall of the Stuarts and the consequent Jacobite unrest. The Highland custom of carrying arms had been prohibited, so that many young men of good character and family readily enlisted to reclaim this privilege. They mostly wore the kilt and coloured hose, though some wore tartan "trews," and they were armed with the musket, pike, dirk and claymore. The badge and cockade in the bonnet and not a uniform tartan, originally distinguished the sides in clan warfare and during the "'45." The standard setts for the tartans with which we are now familiar did not begin to come into general use until 1739. In this year, the independent companies were formed into a regiment called "The Highland Regiment of Foot," originally numbered the 43rd, later 42nd, or the Royal Highland Regiment—the Black Watch—the title being derived from their duties and the dark colouring of the kilt and plaid.

Keith's and Campbell's Highlanders served during the Seven Years' War, 1756–1763, with the Allied army on the Rhine. They established so high a reputation that when marching through Holland on their return home they "were received in the various towns with acclamations, the women presenting laurel leaves to the soldiers." As they passed through Derby,



the inhabitants, remembering the exemplary behaviour of the Jacobite Highlanders under Prince Charles when in their town during the Rising of 1745, gave them an equally cordial reception. Following the Black Watch, the 71st or Fraser's Highlanders, now the 1st Bn. Highland Light Infantry, followed by a number of others, were embodied. At the outbreak of each successive war, the Government of the day turned to the Highlands of Scotland for more men and fresh regiments.

Between 1793 and 1800, no less than 30 foot regiments were brought into existence. Clan feuds and religious differences kept Scotland divided in its loyalties, so that we find that while Scottish regiments

were serving the Hanoverian cause at home and on the mainland of Europe, other Scottish regiments supported France, at whose Court the Stuart princes lived in exile. What were known as "Fencibles" were also formed by ordinary recruiting, and not by ballot, as were the Militia in England during the emergency of 1756-8; and, of these regiments, 77 were raised in Scotland, one relic remaining in the 93rd Highlanders, then known as the Sutherland Fencible Corps. It was in 1881 as the result of the new Territorial system for Infantry, that the former Regular, Militia, and Volunteer Battalions throughout the whole of the British Army had their old numbers as Regiments of Foot transformed into the titles by which they are

now universally known. The Scottish regiments can be said to have formed a part of the British army after 1745, though the Royal Scots had served in Tangier, 1680, the Scots Guards at Namur, 1695, and the Black Watch at Guadaloupe in 1759.

Recalling the services of Highland regiments to France in 1697, Aytoun tells us in his "Lays of the Scottish Cavaliers," how two of Dundee's companies seized an island held by Germans mid-stream in the Rhine, holding it for six weeks against repeated assaults. The chronicler wrote that "in consequence of this action that island is called 'Isle d'Ecosse'."

"Long years went by. The lonely  
isle

In Rhine's impetuous flood  
Has ta'en another name from  
those

Who bought it with their  
blood :

And, though the legend does not  
live—

For legends lightly die—  
The peasant, as he sees the  
stream

In winter rolling by,  
And foaming o'er its channel-  
bed

Between him and the spot  
Won by the warriors of the  
sword,

Still calls that deep and danger-  
ous ford

The Passage of the Scot."

Again, it was the 51st (Highland) Division which led the grand attack across the Rhine in 1945.

### *Royal Courage at Crécy and Agincourt*

By the period of Crécy, in 1346, English archery had been perfected, but the knight's single combat yet largely influenced the battlefield. Fifteen thousand Genoese crossbowmen leaped forward with loud shouts against the English lines under the Black Prince and the Earl of Northampton, but they were met with dogged silence. Their first arrow-flight brought a terrible reply, so rapidly did the English shoot "that it seemed as if it snowed." When the horsed French knights fell hotly upon the line of the Black Prince, determined to strike him down, it seemed that the Prince of Wales would be overwhelmed. His father, Edward III, in personal command of the army on a rise overlooking the field, was besought by an envoy to send aid to his hard-pressed son.

Replied the king: "Return to those that sent you, Sir Thomas, and bid them not send to me again so long as my son lives! Let the boy win his spurs! For, if God so order it, I will that the day may be his, and that the honour may be with him and them to whom I have given it in charge."

The Black Prince emerged victorious, the true knight whose spurs were indeed won in battle. *Noblesse oblige* has for centuries been a command to the hearts of those bearing

the ancient titles of this land, as witness the many names on the Roll of Honour of her wars. At Crécy, English soldiers accounted for 12,000 knights and 30,000 men of foot—a number equal to the whole English force—lying dead on the ground.

At Agincourt, in 1415, after a long and wasting march, the army of King Henry V could muster only 812 men-at-arms and 3,073 archers, and the total strength, with knights and their attendants, could not have exceeded 6,000 men. In those days of chivalry it was the custom of commanders on both sides to deliver speeches which were recorded ; and that of King Harry, recklessly brave as it was, spoke of the certain fate impending the English army. Of his prowess all chroniclers, French as well as English, unite in admiration. He fought on foot, as did all his knights and soldiers. When his brother fell at his side, grievously wounded by a dagger thrust in the stomach, it was Henry who stood over him and, with sweeping mace, kept the Duc d'Alençon and his knights at bay. The English were prodigiously out-numbered ; but while they piled French corpses "as high as a man's head," slaying 10,000 of their enemies, the English lost only five notables, 13 men-at-arms and about 100 others. But, as at Waterloo, four hundred years later, the English stood on the

defensive on selected ground—heavy going on the front, the flanks secured by woods—and it was an eye for ground, not mere fighting, that won the victory. King Harry had achieved undying glory for the arms of England.

We obtain a very fair estimate of the nature of the English soldier of this age in Shakespeare's characterisation of Bardolph, Nym and Pistol—rough-hewn men—and in the steady, worthy Gower, the dry Bates, and the loquacious, yet honest and brave, Fluellen, so picturesquely presented in the play *Henry V*. British soldiers from England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland, have changed not one whit since those days. Shakespeare depicts them with strange oaths in their mouths, quarrelsome and sometimes in liquor ; but he shows them also, of every class from the king downwards, as sharing in common all the discomforts and dangers of campaigning. Nor were they ever vain-glorious, for modesty has always been a characteristic of the British soldier, and to "shoot a line" won a quick rebuke in days gone by, as it does to-day. King Harry's first words on the certainty of the victory are : "Praised be God, and not our strength, for it !" When he reviews the greatness of the victory, he says again : "Take it, God, for it is only thine !"





### *Victories at the End of a Day's March*

Fighting under Marlborough on the Danube in 1704, British troops displayed their amazing capacity to fight pitched battles long after other soldiers had sunk down from fatigue. They had marched to exhaustion through hostile country in Picardy under Henry V, as they did later in Ireland, in Scotland, in Spain under Wellington, across the plains of Hindustan under Outram and Havelock, under Roberts to Kandahar; with their boots in shreds along the weary roads from Mons; in the retreat to Dunkirk and to "Armageddon" at Caen, Falaise, and the Rhine. Some of their greatest victories have been won at the end of a long march, on which men sometimes slept as they trudged, the even rhythm of

their marching feet kept swinging to the tap-tap of the drum.

The storming of Schellenberg in 1704, though less known than Marlborough's famous victories at Blenheim, Ramillies, Oudenarde, and Malplaquet, admirably illustrates the point, as it does also the great captain's ruthless will and tactics. The Franco-Bavarian army under Marshal d'Arco held a strong position with excellent troops, though his defences were not completed. Within an hour or two, 60,000 men under the famous "*Marlbrouk*" would fall upon him, without regard to the fatigue of their march or the price they would have to pay for a victory which would win a gateway into Bavaria.

D'Arco, well understanding that when British troops marched it was to win their

victory before nightfall, did not share the delight of his Bavarians, mocking at Allied imprudence. Marlborough's infantry marched on, while the bulk of his cavalry went into the copses to cut fascines with which the infantry could fill in any ditches the enemy had dug in front of their breastworks. Schellenberg presented a formidable aspect, but if the price of its capture to-day would be heavy, to-morrow it might be unpurchasable. Marlborough therefore thrust the British infantry on the hill. The leading troops of the First Guards, Ingoldsby's (Royal Welch Fusiliers), two battalions of Orkney's (Royal Scots), and Meredith's (1st Hampshires) fell by scores, but the imperturbable array moved forward slowly, the soldiers with shouldered arms, grasping their fascines. The Bavarian guns, firing case-shot (parcels of bullets—the forerunner of shrapnel) instead of single cannon-ball, lacerated the ranks, while the breastworks began to blaze with musketry. General Door fell dead. Undaunted even by an unexpected gully into which they threw their fascines, being thereafter deprived of them in the final assault, the British infantry raised shouts of "God save the Queen!" and broke into a charge.

In his memoirs, the commander of a battalion of French grenadiers tells of how

the British infantry "broke into the charge, and rushed at full speed, shouting at the tops of their voices, to throw themselves into our entrenchments. The rapidity of their movements, together with their loud yells, were truly alarming. . . . The English infantry led this attack with the greatest intrepidity, right up to our parapet. . . . Men were slaying or tearing at the muzzles of guns and the bayonets which pierced their entrails, crushing under their feet their own wounded comrades and even gouging out their opponents' eyes with their nails." Unmoved by the bloody disaster around him, Marlborough had the tactical situation in hand. Most of his high officers had been killed or wounded, and he had flung Lord John Hay's Regiment of Dragoons (the Royal Scots Greys) into the battle as infantrymen.

Marlborough's tactics were to thrust his British infantry upon what the enemy felt was the key of their position, and to press these attacks with complete disregard for human life, while holding his cavalry to exploit the victory. P.B.I.—everyone knows the significance of these letters! Across the shambles, Marlborough's final attack struggled forward. Overwhelmed, the defence collapsed, its remaining defenders rushing through the cornfields towards the river across which they hoped to escape. But at this

moment, Marlborough launched the 35 squadrons of his British and Prussian cavalry, and the troopers, infuriated by the carnage among their comrades of the Foot, gave no quarter. The prize had been won; but as usual, the British regiments, with the hardest task, were the most severely hit. Victory can be purchased at too high a price, and this is perhaps an illustration, as, in retrospect, historians may think that the results of the battles of the Somme in 1916 and of Passchendaele at the close of 1917 did not justify the appalling casualties sustained. But these great feats of arms speak with eloquence of the tenacity and courage of British infantry in the face of the fiercest opposition. Unlike any other military force in the world, the British army has marched endless leagues over pastured plains and along roads deeply rutted by the baggage trains in snow or tropical rains, across mountain ranges and sandy wastes, to fight its battles and win its victories when other troops would be going into bivouac and camp.

### *Regimental Nicknames*

Nearly every regiment has its own nickname, some of which originated in acts of outstanding gallantry. The Lancashire Fusiliers are called "The Minden Boys" because as the 20th Foot they made, with the others of the "Unsurpass-

able Six," the historic charge on the French cavalry in 1759. August 1st is always specially observed, a rose being worn by all ranks and the colours and drums being decked with roses—a reminder of the gardens through which the six regiments moved to the attack.

### A ROSE FOR MINDEN

A Rose, a Rose for Minden day!  
Put up your roses on Minden day.  
Sturdy lads from the Hampshire  
Downs,  
From the smoke and grime of the  
northern towns,  
From the banks of the lovely  
winding Tweed  
Which sends us still the good  
border breed,  
Lads from Suffolk and Swansea  
way,  
To remind the world that it's  
Minden day!

"You got a rose, Jim, same as me,  
'Wearin' 'n all down the line,  
they be.  
Folks in Lyndhurst would call  
us scats  
Fightin' wiv roses in our 'ats. . .

"Withdraw yer ramrod . . .  
prime yer pan,  
Takin' time from the fogle-  
man . . .  
Can't see nowt in this blasted  
smoke,  
Wot stings yer eyeballs an'  
makes yer choke . . .  
I've emptied my cartouche-box  
. . . fired the lot  
Gawd! ain't my perishin' musket  
'ot!

"Ave they got yer, Jim? . . .  
'old up, old lad,  
Christ! I 'opes they ain't 'urt  
yer bad,

Where 'ave they 'it yer ? . . . In  
 the 'ead ? . . .  
 Why don't yer arnswer ? . . . Oh  
 Gawd ! 'e's dead !  
 We been together, lad, share an'  
 share,  
 Since we took the shillin' at  
 Lyndhurst fair.  
 Ain't never wanted a better  
 friend,  
 And now they've killed yer . . .  
 an' that's the end !

"They've beat the advance, Jim  
 . . . we got to part,  
 And you lyin' there . . . it fair  
 breaks me 'eart !  
 I'd leave ye a keepsake afore I  
 goes,  
 But I ain't got nothin', Jim . . .  
 only me rose !"

It's Minden day, it's Minden day !  
 We put up our roses on Minden  
 day !  
 Lads from Suffolk, Hampshire,  
 Wales,  
 Lancashire, Lowlands and York-  
 shire dales,  
 To remind the world that we  
 fight the way  
 Our fathers taught us on Minden  
 day !

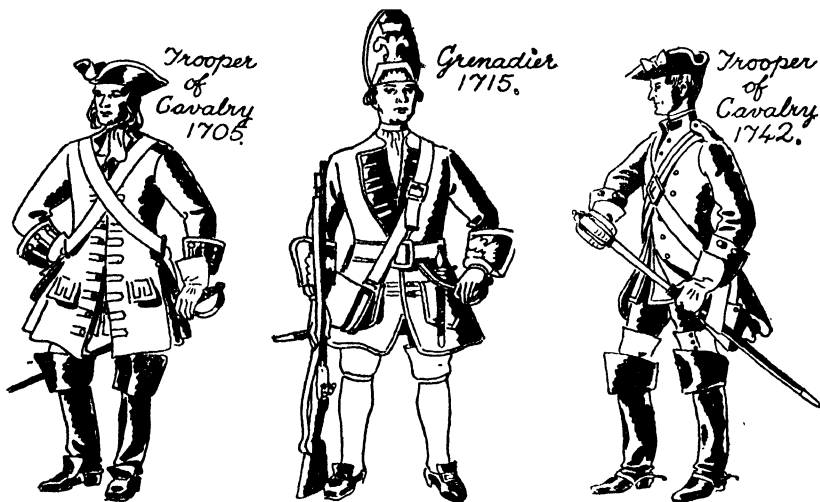
J. S. HICKS.

The Queen's Own Royal  
 Regiment are known as the  
 "Dirty Half Hundred," dating  
 from Vimiera in 1809, when as  
 the 50th Foot, Napier described  
 them as charging "with faces  
 grimed with powder, as black  
 as their own lapels." The  
 Devonshire Regiment is known  
 as "The Bloody Eleventh," its  
 1st battalion, as the 11th Foot,  
 having gone into the battle of  
 Salamanca in 1812 with a  
 strength of 412 officers and  
 men, of whom 341 became

casualties. The 15th Hussars,  
 formerly Light Dragoons, were  
 authorised to bear this inscrip-  
 tion on their helmets—"Five  
 battalions of French defeated  
 and taken by this regiment,  
 with their colours and nine  
 pieces of cannon, on the Plains  
 of Emsdorff, July 16th, 1760,"  
 and their soubriquet is "The  
 Fighting Fifteenth."

### *"The Bravest Soldier"*

Known as "the bravest  
 soldier," Major-General Sir  
 Rollo Gillespie, to whom there  
 is a memorial in St. Paul's  
 Cathedral, lived a charmed life.  
 His daring exploits were in-  
 numerable. As a young captain  
 of the 20th Light Dragoons, he  
 volunteered for service with the  
 13th Foot (Somerset Light  
 Infantry) in the West Indies,  
 and swam ashore with a brother  
 officer with their swords in their  
 mouths, reaching the beach  
 under heavy fire. His boyish  
 looks had been remarked on by  
 George III, and his prescription  
 was early rising. It was while  
 out riding at 6 a.m. in the heat  
 of the Indian July, 1806, that a  
 horseman, spurring furiously,  
 approached from the direction  
 of Vellore with a message that  
 a tumultuous mutiny had oc-  
 curred within the fort. Gillespie  
 galloped back to his barracks,  
 turned out a squadron of the  
 19th Light Dragoons and a  
 troop of native cavalry, and  
 then, outstripping his leading  
 troops, he came within hailing  
 distance of the beleaguered



garrison of the 69th Foot, among whom not a round of ammunition remained. The mutineers, with artillery, were massed for the final attack, when a sergeant who had served with Gillespie in the West Indies, suddenly espied a figure charging down the dusty Arcot Road. "If Colonel Gillespie be alive," he cried, "that is he, and God Almighty has sent him from the West Indies to save our lives in the East!" The mutineers, too, had seen Gillespie, but were safely barricaded behind the massive, iron-studded doors of the main gateway, beside which was a wicket gate.

Accompanied by five men of the garrison, Gillespie broke down the wicket and came under the close fire of the main body of mutineers massed in the palace yard. He tore at the

massive locks and bolts of the main gate. His squadron with their galloper-guns should be arriving at any minute, and it was necessary to break down the gateway, above which on the ramparts the 69th were clustered, to facilitate the cavalry charge against the mutineers. Observing a rope hanging from the walls, Gillespie swarmed up it to join the gallant party above. Grasping the regimental Colour, he rallied the party. The square commanding the gateway was filled with mutineers. Putting himself again at the head of the small band, Gillespie descended the ramparts and led a bayonet charge, carried out with heavy casualties. At this moment, as the gates were flung open, his cavalry arrived, putting every mutineer to the sword. Thus did the 19th (Royal Irish)

Dragoons come to be known as "The Terrors of the East." When the butchered and mutilated bodies of the European sick in the hospital were found, the troopers went berserk.

"Show me the ——" roared one burly dragoon brandishing a pistol—"and I'll blow their —— heads off!" In the course of an hour, Gillespie had broken down the gates under heavy fire, swarmed up the fort walls, led two bayonet charges, and helped his cavalry to take their just revenge. By 10 o'clock, the British flag was again flying over Vellore. Gillespie's prompt action and superb gallantry had been the salvation of the whole of British India. On another occasion, by a display of unexampled coolness and daring, he captured the central fortress of Palimbang and 250 guns without the loss of a man. He died as he had lived, at the head of his men in battle, at Kalunga, fighting in Nepal against a worthy foe, the Gurkhas, who have since become our staunch allies.

### *The "Sporting Spirit"—Quebec and the Douro*

For sheer daring British soldiers have had few equals. In Britain were invented the most popular of sports, football, cricket and hockey, by which we implanted the team spirit throughout the Empire. Organised games and individual athletics have for long been the background of military training

in the British army. Love of sport and adventure runs strongly in our veins. "A bold general can be lucky but no general can be lucky unless he is bold," wrote Wavell, one of the ablest and most successful soldiers of the age, in his famous Lectures on "Generals and Generalship," and he placed "the quality of robustness above every other quality for success," defined as both mental and physical. Wolfe, the hero-mystic of every school-boy's imagination; pioneer, creator of the great Dominion of Canada, the soldier, who, leading a triumphant charge on the Heights of Abraham at Quebec in 1759, fell mortally wounded, to "die happy" at the age of thirty-two, achieved an even greater victory in overcoming his own physical infirmities.

There are innumerable instances of daring enterprise in our early military history, in the same spirit as are the exploits of the Commandos of the present age. "How," wrote Sir William Napier in his glowing narrative of the Peninsular War, "how force the passage of a river, deep, swift, more than three hundred yards wide, and with ten thousand veterans guarding the opposite bank? Alexander the Great might have turned from it without shame!" This was the situation confronting the main body of the British army on the south bank of the River Douro,

from which the French Marshal Soult had removed every boat, and not far distant Beresford's small British force lay at the mercy of the French. As luck would have it, a barber of Oporto paddled himself across the river unobserved during the night, to shave a valued customer, the Prior of Amacante. British scouts were seeking for anything that would float and met the Prior, who told them of the barber's skiff and that on the farther bank lay several great grape barges. Within a few minutes a Colonel, the Prior, and the barber were across the river, and, by ten in the morning, three barges had been towed across.

Wellesley, in cocked hat and dark frock coat, from a height beside the convent of Serra, enjoying a bird's-eye view of the city, had already decided where to effect a crossing if boats could be found. "Let the men cross," he said. An officer and 25 men of the 3rd Buffs (East Kent Regiment) embarked, to be followed by a second, but when the third was half-way across, the French drums suddenly beat the alarm. The Buffs had taken up their position in a large building called the Seminary, and on three sides under heavy fire their position for half an hour trembled in the balance. They could be reinforced only by dribbles, while Soult was massing his battalions and had brought his guns into action.

Suddenly, the battle took another turn. Some of the townspeople—corresponding to "the men of the Maquis" or "underground movement" of the present day—finding the lower part of the town unguarded, brought over some big boats to their allies. The Buffs, reinforced, held on, and the French, harried in the flank and under fire of our guns from across the river, suffered complete defeat, being forced to yield the second city of Portugal to our army, sustaining its rôle as the liberators of Europe. In modern parlance we might well describe the Passage of the Douro as "a very sporting affair" or a "good show," by which expressions, with common British indifference, soldiers habitually refer to their great military feats. Yet the true spirit of sport is always there—the contempt for risk and danger, the robustness of mind and body from which proceed instant decisions followed at once by immediate action.

#### *No Mean Inheritance—Corunna and Waterloo*

British troops have a reputation second to none in the assault, but we take particular delight in our stubborn rear-guard actions and where we have fallen back in retreat fiercely contesting every yard of ground against overwhelming numbers. Mons, 1914, and Dunkirk and St. Valéry, 1940,

have passed into legend. A classic retreat, without parallel in its ordeal and heroism, was that of Sir John Moore to Corunna in 1809. The route lay by a good road across huge mountains, without shelter or cover of any kind. The troops were half-famished, shoeless, their uniforms in rags. It was mid-winter; howling winds drove sleet and ice in their faces, leaving them drenched, their weary limbs tortured with ague. They sank exhausted at the roadside, dying in one another's arms in the snow; and the long track over Monte del Cabiero, across which struggled the ragged, frost-bitten army, was littered with bodies of men, horses and mules, dead from starvation. The French cavalry perpetually harried the rearguard, which again and again riddled their ranks, as frozen fingers pressed the triggers of their muskets. But, refusing to give battle, Marshal Soult hunted Moore's army across the mountains to Corunna, hoping to exterminate the British in Portugal with an overwhelming force in front and with their backs to the sea. The full story of the battle makes enthralling reading; and the epic of Moore's death when victory was his is a poem with a special appeal to young Britain.

"Not a drum was heard, not a funeral note,  
As his corse to the rampart we hurried."

Moore was struck from his horse, hideously, mortally wounded, and as he was borne from the battlefield he murmured to his friend, Colonel Alexander Anderson: "You know I have always wished to die this way." But the tattered British regiments had saved Portugal from a Napoleonic invasion, and the army which Moore led to Corunna, as Gort brought another to Dunkirk, was to fight the French on many famous battlefields, until it overthrew the tyrant of Europe at Waterloo.

No story should be more familiar than is that of the stubborn resistance of the British line at Waterloo.

The "Iron Duke" had admirably chosen his ground on a reverse slope, so that the French could not see the British troops until quite close, while Hougoumont and other farms served as *points d'appui*. Through the long hours of the June day, silent and immovable, the squares and squadrons stood in the trampled corn, harassed by incessant artillery and musketry fire to which they were forbidden to reply. The bullets of skirmishers, endeavouring to find or create a breach in the ranks around them, and the great round shot, tore through the tightly packed ranks. But every gap was sealed, the quiet order passed — "Close in on the centre, men!" — securing discipline and a bold front above the



cries of the stricken and the groans of the fallen. At the sun's setting, the regiments, still shoulder to shoulder, stood fast upon the ground they had held at noon. The famous Old Guard of France had been broken by a British square.

No troops could have withstood this terrible ordeal unless the indestructible cohesion of each regiment had been secured in the mutual confidence and respect between leaders and led. The thought that defeat is even remotely possible does not occur to the mind of the British soldier: and the spirit that looks forward to victory as a certainty is due to regimental traditions carried through generations by the professional zeal of British officers and N.C.Os. To be heir to this tradition is no mean inheritance!

The Crimean Campaign revealed deficiencies both in generalship and in the care for troops which shocked the nation. But then, to shed her light in the darkest places, Florence Nightingale came to work in the hospital at Scutari, and from her devoted work much later sprang Queen Alexandra's Imperial Military Nursing Service. Three heroic episodes on the same day in 1854 are also outstanding—the Charge of the Light Brigade, the stand by the 93rd Highlanders and

the Charge of the Heavy Brigade at Balaklava, in which the Royal Scots Greys, the Inniskillings, the Fourth and Fifth Dragoon Guards, in all 700 horsemen, drove 3,000 Russians from the field.

Commenting upon Balaklava, John Ruskin left this inspiring memorial: "I ask their witness, to whom the war has changed the aspect of the earth and imagery of heaven, whose hopes it has cut off like a spider's web, whose treasure it has placed, in a moment, under the seals of clay. Those who can never more see sunrise, nor watch the climbing light gild the eastern clouds, without thinking what graves it has gilded first, far down behind the dark earth-line—who never more shall see the crocus bloom in spring without thinking what dust it is that feeds the wild flowers of Balaklava. Ask their witness, and see if they will not reply that it is well with them, and with theirs; that they would have it no otherwise; would not, if they might, receive back their gifts of love and life, nor take again the purple of their blood out of the cross on the breastplate of England. Ask then; and though they should answer only with a sob, listen if it does not gather upon their lips into the sound of the old Seton war-cry: 'Set on'."



## *The Master of Ordnance, Parent to Three Great Units*

"UBIQUE—Quo fas et gloria ducunt." This motto of the Royal Regiment of Artillery epitomises its history, for, indeed, it has soldiered "Everywhere—Where the Right and Duty lead." If, also it had given only one soldier of great renown to the Empire's service, none more distinguished, no greater fighter, could be found than Field-Marshal Lord Roberts, V.C. Affectionately known throughout the nation as "Our Bobs," he died in 1914 at the age of 82 in the midst of the troops he loved so well and within the sound of the guns, while visiting British and Indian troops with the B.E.F. in France.

The record of the Royal Artillery since its formation

in 1716 is a proud one, and it shares the battle honours of every regiment in the British army.

### *The "Trayne of Artillerie"*

Prior to the formation of the Regiment in 1716, in case of war, the Master of Ordnance assembled a "Trayne of Artillerie," consisting of its skilled officers and gunners with their assistants, and such other specialist tradesmen as farriers, wheelwrights, coopers, and an engineer officer with his pioneers. The guns for the train consisted of brass cannon of various calibres—18- to 6-pounders, demi-culverins, sakers and minions. There was also a mortar detachment, served by bombardiers, a title remaining, though it has lost its original meaning, and fire

masters whose duty it was to make explosives for the destruction of city gates, walls and bridges. The carters were milicians, serving under contract with their horses, but they had no discipline nor training.

### *Commandeered*

Last year he drew the harvest  
 home  
 Along the winding upland lane,  
 The children twisted marigolds  
 And clover flowers to deck his  
 mane.  
 Last year he drew the harvest  
 home.

-day, with puzzled, patient face,  
 With ears a-droop and weary  
 feet  
 marches to the sound of drums  
 And draws the gun along the  
 street.  
 -day he draws the guns of  
 war!

L. G. MOBERLEY.

James II's Warrant of 1685 created a Royal Regiment of Militaries from the civilians in order to provide an escort for the guns. The artillery was magnificently apparelled in velvet, with long silk loops and silver buttons, buff belt and shoes, and fur caps laced with red galloon, scarlet stockings and halberds. For campaigning, the officers with the Train were armed with breast and back plates and an iron cap fitting the scalp. The Train was completed with a company of footmen under a Captain of the Boats, with up to 600 horses and 200 waggons for

the transport of stores, ammunition, tents, and entrenching tools. The Train might be compared to an amalgamation of the Royal Artillery, Royal Engineers, Royal Army Ordnance Corps and the horse transport of the Royal Army Service Corps.

The conduct of war depended much upon fortresses; and engineers, known as Trench Masters or Captains of Pioneers, were responsible for the field works. But, until 1692, they had no distinct military rank, this being conferred as the result of disputes which arose over the distribution of prize money. As Master-General of Ordnance, Marlborough saw to it that his army should be properly furnished with the artillery arm. The two first companies formed were quick to vindicate the claims of their author, for, in their earliest action at Vigo on the west coast of Spain, the young gunners made such excellent shooting that they forced the garrison to a speedy surrender. When, eight years later, the Spaniards attacked the Rock of Gibraltar—famous for its batteries of artillery—again it was the gunners who forced them to abandon the onslaught. At Dettingen in 1743, and at Minden in 1759, the murderous fire from the artillery contributed greatly to our victory. It was at Minden, also, that batteries were first "put to the trot," joining in

the pursuit of the enemy, and halting from time to time to pound the retreating masses. Two of the three batteries engaged at Minden live on to-day as the 9th Heavy and 2nd Anti-Tank Batteries. The following year at Warburg, the same guns came down "on a gallop" to the river bank, wherefrom they brought such fierce fire to bear on the French that they could not re-form.

### *Gibraltar, India, the Peninsular War*

The key to the Mediterranean—our short route, also, to the East since the opening of the Suez Canal—has always been Gibraltar, a vital link in Imperial communications. Besieged by the Spaniards in 1727, France and Spain together tried to wrest the fortress from us in a siege of three years, ending in 1782, when General Elliott held the fortress against famine and a bombardment from over 400 guns on land and at sea. Hitherto, the firing of shells had been confined to mortars, but during the siege our gunners introduced a new practice, firing some 200,000 shells, instead of solid shot, at the enemy. The defences of Gibraltar have always depended upon artillery, "the Rock" being a honeycomb of galleries, casemates and mechanically controlled guns of all calibres secreted in shelters.

The artillery was originally

organised in battalions, and, by 1759, there were three; but to give to this arm greater mobility, a few years later the Royal Horse artillery was formed with four troops, of which "A" Troop became the famous "Chestnut Troop," whose dashing displays in the arena have often delighted so many thousands of visitors to the Royal Tournament in London. It was in the Napoleonic Wars that the artillery arm came to full recognition, for, as a young man, the Corsican tyrant had served his war apprenticeship as a gunner, and knew well how effectual artillery fire could be in winning battles. In the Peninsular War the French artillery greatly outnumbered the number of guns that Wellington could dispose. His artillery commanders, Sir August Frazer and Sir Alexander Dickson, were, however, men of great tactical ability and resource, who made the fullest use of their guns and won high praise from Wellington in his dispatches.

Previously, in India, against the formidable Mahrattas, his force of the 74th and 78th Highlanders and the 19th Light Dragoons, together with five Sepoy Battalions and native Cavalry from Mysore and Poona, included three batteries of 18 guns of Madras and Bombay Artillery. Owing to the bullocks being shot earlier in the day, most of his guns had



not been available for the great Battle of Assaye, September, 1803, but the man who was finally to defeat Napoleon in Europe had learned how effectually artillery could be used against cavalry. When thousands of fierce Mahratta swordsmen swept across the ground, cutting down the Highlanders, he drove his cavalry at their flank, and used his remaining guns with great effect. The Mahrattas had many cannon in the field, from which our troops sustained the heaviest losses, though by the end of the day we had captured 101 guns with most of their train. Napoleon spoke lightly of the "Hindu General," and regarded as impertinent his intervention in Spain with 21,000 troops as the foil to 300,000 French soldiers. But Wellington knew how to combine the three

arms of the service to perfection, and the 937 guns at his disposal earned such tributes as: "The enemy was shattered by the terrible fire of Robe's artillery"; and "throughout the day was of the greatest service." The campaign was characterised also by many sieges, in which heavy artillery played its impressive part.

Rockets were not, as is often supposed, a German novelty of 1944, in the form of V1 and V2. They had been employed as projectiles in the British Army, the Rocket Troop being present at the battle of Leipzig in 1813, and again at Waterloo. But rockets fell into disfavour when breech-loading field guns and shrapnel shells became universal for lighter artillery. It was in 1784 that Lieut. Henry Shrapnel invented the type of shell which carries

his name to-day; and, replacing the cannon-ball, it was spherical in shape, containing bullets and a bursting charge. The refinement of time-fuses did not come till much later.

From its inception British artillery has been distinguished by its precision of fire and mobility. The first is due, no doubt, to our native genius for machinery and to a comparatively small army which could be trained to a high state of perfection; while the second resulted from our national love for horses. After the practice of contracting for civilian drivers had been abandoned, the Corps of Royal Artillery Drivers was formed in 1806, until the institution of the R.H.A. These men were almost invariably yeomen from the shires; and the officers took a keen delight in acquiring the finest horses, always well-matched, from the Remount Depots for their famous Batteries. In result, both Wellington, and other commanders since, have always been admirably served on the battlefield by their artillery.

Our campaign in the Crimea, 1854-5, witnessed important artillery developments, and our gunners then used the breech-loading 40 - pr. Arm - strong. In the Crimea, the R.A. gained nine V.Cs., an award just introduced; and during the Indian Mutiny, 1857-59, 19 similar awards were made to gunners.

### *In the Great War*

Up till the time of its mechanisation, the R.A. closely resembled the original 'Trayne' in its work and with its various experts. In the Great War, 1914-18, the advance of science and the enormous multiplication of guns witnessed the first expression of the Regiment with which we are now familiar. Apart from the vast labour required for the preparation of guns, transport and ammunition for battle, the business of making maps and plans, barrage charts, the laying out of lines and points for day and night firing, and the examination of air photographs, is one of great responsibility. The "creeping barrage" was invented in 1916, and firing by calculation without previous registration first employed in the battle of Cambrai, 1917.

For the opening of the Battle of the Somme on 1st July, 1916, 13,000 tons of ammunition were fired into the German lines, most of which had to be brought from the dumps to the battery positions on pack saddles and thereafter manhandled. When we assaulted the Hindenburg Line in September, 1918, 65,000 tons of shells were projected into the enemy's battle front, of which the IVth Army alone, during 48 hours, fired 3,000 tons, representing in money nearly £5,000,000.

Later, after the breakthrough, the field batteries

were kept well to their positions by skilled, hard-riding drivers, their knees well in, heads down, and whips gently encouraging the willing offside leader. The battery unlimbered, action front, the air some 3,000 yards ahead filled with little white puffs of smoke, beneath which masses of enemy infantry broke and ran, leaving some of their numbers stretched in death or wounded. A counter-battery searched it out—first a long, then a short, then a direct hit. The drivers were called into action amid the burst of shells, with a horse down here and a badly wounded man there. "Stretcher bearers!" The battery had disappeared into the valley, to emerge again in another position in support of the groups of infantry which were always pressing on. It was a dangerous and difficult job, this one of keeping a mobile battery in action. As soldiers rested and slept, as they marched and counter-marched, as wave after wave of gallant infantry swept over morass and devastated shell-torn wastes; as they died, as they lived! "Ubique—Quo fas et gloria ducunt."

### *The Royal Engineers*

As noted, the Royal Engineers originally came into being as Trench Masters and Captains of Pioneers; and, after Cromwell, a warrant was issued for two cadets to visit foreign fortresses and gain experience

in sieges and campaigns. Their dress was similar to that of the artillery, both serving in the ordnance corps. At the Battle of Blenheim, the enemy flattered themselves that Marlborough would not be able to surmount the difficulties of bringing up his heavy cannon; but Colonel Blood, an engineer officer who was Chief of the Ordnance Train, overcame the obstacles, with the result that there was in Marlborough's artillery fire "as much order, dispatch and success as ever before was seen."

Mining and counter-mining, which played so large a part in the trench warfare of the Great War—those at La Bassée and La Boisselle with its deep crater, 320 yards round at the top, being wonders to behold—had been resorted to as far back as the 16th century. Mining and its detection have always been the hazardous and difficult task of the R.E. Of the siege of Tournay in 1709, a realistic description is given in *The Daily Courant* of 10th August: "Our miners and the enemy very often meet each other, when they have sharp combats, till one side gives way. We have got in to three or four of the enemy's great galleries, which are thirty or forty feet underground and lead to several of their chambers, and in these we fight in armour by lanthorn and candle, they disputing every inch of the gallery with us to hinder

our finding out their great mines. Yesternight, we found one which was placed just under our bomb batteries, in which were 18 cwt. of powder beside many bombs, and if we had not been so lucky as to find it, in a very few hours our batteries and some hundreds of men had taken a flight into the air."

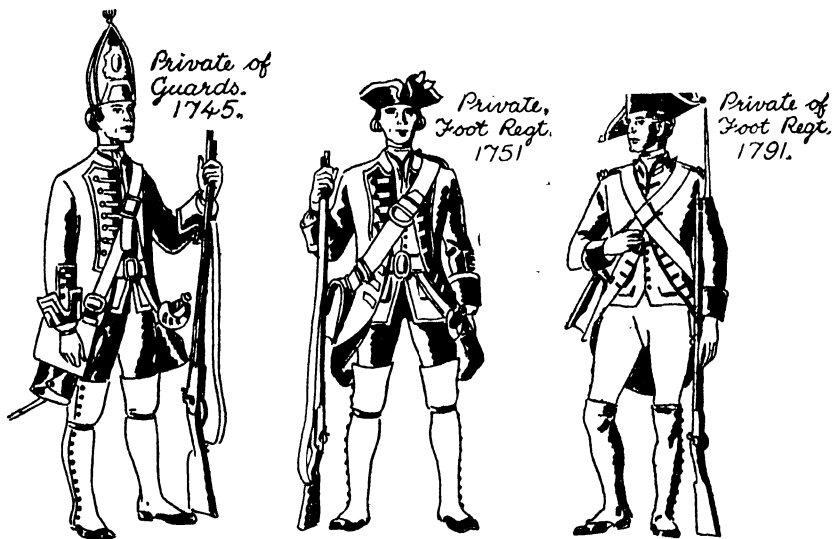
The principal technical work of the R.E. has always been bridging, road and railway making, water supply, and hutting. Of the many "sappers" who have risen to high distinction in the country's service, may be especially named Field Marshal Lord Napier of Magdala; Major-General Charles Gordon, the hero of Khartoum; and, without doubt the greatest soldier-administrator born of these islands, Lord Kitchener, who, in addition to his outstanding services in Egypt, the Sudan, and India, laid the foundations for the victorious British armies of 1918 and 1945. Expert in all branches of engineering and surveying, the Royal Engineers are also fully trained soldiers; and until the formation of the Royal Corps of Signals after the Great War in 1918, the R.E. were responsible also for signal communications.

The first Field Telegraph Unit, C Troop of the R.E. Train, was formed in 1870. The present corps is responsible for wireless, telegraph and telephone; it has mechan-

ical cable-layers—"spewers"—driven by a petrol engine to throw out the cable a distance of some 40 ft. from the side of its carrier, travelling at speed; and motor-cycle dispatch riders, who, with crash helmet and thick goggles ride across rough country considered impossible for anything mechanical a few years ago. The telegraph and telephone services vary from field equipment in the front battle zone to large exchanges and teleprinters in the back areas, and pigeons have always been of great value. The wireless operators, generally using code, which requires an elaborate system of deciphering, will often be in touch with stations thousands of miles distant, giving vital information as to important events in other theatres of war likely to influence enemy morale and other conditions on their own immediate fronts. Before finalising his battle plan, a commander will always consult his signal officer as to the possibility of communications.

For campaigning, the R.E. were organised into Field Companies, and during the Great War there were special Tunnelling Companies. These latter were recruited from among those skilled at the coal face, who burrowed like moles beneath the enemy's entrenchments, while the Germans feverishly worked in other galleries, and it was always





a guess which side would bring off the big "blow" first. During this trench warfare, soldiers would sometimes cynically observe: "Another big bang and . . . all quiet on the Western Front!"

The Royal Engineers were in the vanguard of all our great advances during the 1939-45 war. Theirs has been the task of detecting mine-fields, and of creating the gaps through which armour and infantry can pass; theirs the business, as on the Anzio, of bridging torrential streams and swift rivers under heavy fire.

A dispatch from Eritrea records that: "It was the perfectly timed work of our sappers which enabled the British Armoured Forces to enter

Keren. Operating under fire on a steep mountain side, the sappers succeeded in clearing an important roadblock just as the tanks and armoured cars arrived. All field glasses among the waiting British troops then trained anxiously on these vehicles as, like large beetles, they crept along the narrow winding track which had been cleared for them. The sappers still moved ahead, testing for mines. Soon a white flag went up on the strategic peak of Sanchal."

Before the fall of Bardia in Libya, R.E. night patrols reconnoitred the vast anti-tank ditch, almost thirty miles in circumference, forming the outward defences of the town. Working under continuous fire,

they finally blew out the sides of the strongest part of the ditch just before the attack at dawn, enabling the tanks to enter behind the main forts. Within forty minutes a causeway had been built up, and across it went the armoured division. For several years, skilled Italian engineers had been strengthening these defences with breastworks, concrete walls and heavy wire entanglements. With giant bulldozers, R.E. companies have cleared ground for aerodromes, and with mechanical excavators have dug trenches. On several occasions, sappers, waiting until the last of our troops have crossed a bridge, have sacrificed their lives in completing the demolitions.

On D-day, had it not been for the unsurpassed gallantry of the Royal Engineers, up to their necks in water, and sometimes beneath it, under terrific fire from shore batteries and machine guns, with high technical skill detonating mines and removing fuses, our safe landing on the Normandy beaches could not have been made. The Bomb Disposal Squads, too, operating under the walls of tottering masonry and in extreme peril, have often also saved many lives and valuable buildings from destruction, notably when a vast German bomb was removed from the roadway under the shadow of St. Paul's Cathedral, for which the officer in charge received

the newly instituted George Cross.

The army's engineer officers have been employed on many tasks of international importance, serving on Boundary Commissions and settling disputes in Bessarabia, Mesopotamia, the Congo, the Indian Frontiers, the German Reich after 1918, and in every remote part of the world. They furnish the staff for the Geographical Section of the War Office, which is responsible for making and printing both the general and the precision maps used in our campaigns. To their lot falls also the responsibility for the provision and maintenance of barracks, railway staffs, water supply, and drainage, for our troops at home and overseas. The R.E., too, provide the camouflage experts, who, as if by a conjuring trick, change a lorry park into a sleepy village, and snipers' posts into fallen trees or hayricks, and teach men, while stalking an enemy, how to evade the watchful sentry's eyes and ears.

The headquarters of the Royal Engineers is at Chatham, and that of the Royal Artillery at Woolwich, where also had long been established the Royal Military Academy in which cadets for both arms of the service received their early training. One of the posters, which some time before the introduction of conscription advertised the army, bore the

slogan: "Join the Modern Army and learn a Trade." The rapid mechanisation of the Army led to the establishment of the Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Corps, largely to furnish suitable and skilled recruits for which the Army Council extended its technical education establishments. Boys are accepted from 14 years of age and receive a complete technical training, recognised by the trade unions as the equivalent of apprenticeship, as fitters, electricians, armourers, blacksmiths, coppersmiths, instrument mechanics, turners and wheelers. Vacancies for the schools are subject to keen contest by competitive examinations, conducted, as were those for Woolwich and Sandhurst, by the Civil Service Commissioners. The school at Arborfield provides for the training of over 1,000 boys, who thereafter during their period of military service in R.E.M.E. become responsible for all the maintenance-engineering tasks for artillery, machine guns, rifles, tanks, lorries, motor vehicles, bicycles and other mechanical devices.

### *The Royal Army Service Corps*

The work of the Royal Army Service Corps was originally also under the Master of Ordnance. In a celebrated dictum Napoleon said: "An army moves on its belly." The main task of the R.A.S.C. has been

to keep the army fed. Between 1857-70, it was known as the Military Train, during which period for a while mules were substituted for horses, from which the corps derived its nickname of "The Moke Train." For a long while the commissariat and transport staff had been responsible for supplies; but, in 1888, General Sir Redvers Buller, V.C., Quartermaster-General, himself an expert in horse and cattle breeding and transport, caused the Army Service Corps to be formed as a regiment.

During the Great War, each division was served by its own train, divided into companies for each infantry and cavalry brigade, with one in reserve. The feeding strength of the British armies in France alone was over 2,700,000 men and 400,000 animals; and a division, in weight alone, required some 200 tons of supplies every day.

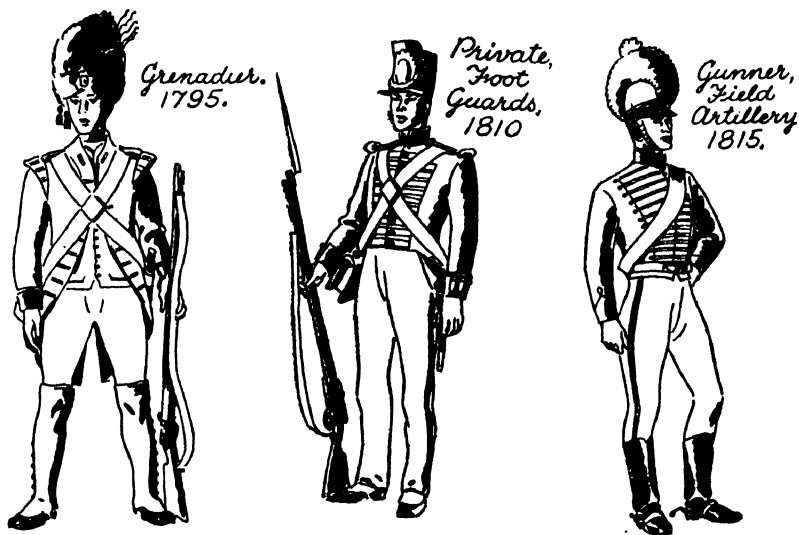
"A high morale," as Sir Douglas Haig wrote in his last Despatch of 21st March, 1919, "depends to a very large extent upon the feeding and general well-being of our troops. . . . We can justly say that our supply system has been developed into one of the most perfect in the world." The rapid advances made by the British army in Abyssinia, in Northern Africa, and across France into the heart of Germany, or far into the Burmese jungle—when occasion has de-

manded, many hundreds of tons of foodstuffs have been transported, even by air, in co-operation with the R.A.F.—were facilitated by the organising ability and zeal of the R.A.S.C.

The Mechanical Transport grew from a small nucleus of 19 motor transport companies existing in 1914 until by the Armistice, 1918, the number of lorries on establishment had been multiplied five hundred times. On the cessation of hostilities, in France alone, there were over 30,000 lorries; while a branch of the R.A.S.C., the Road Construction Company, in their duties covered 8,500,000 miles of French roads each week. Many skilled tradesmen are employed in this corps, upon which the whole mobility of the army first and last depends. Formerly, army cooks underwent courses at the cookery schools; but after 1939, in order further to raise the standard, the Royal Army Catering Corps was formed, to which, in addition to a variety of other duties, the admirable body of women known as the Auxiliary Territorial Service render assistance. The old regimental canteens are now also conducted by the comprehensive institution known as N.A.A.F.I., in the field styled the Expeditionary Force Institute.

The Corps maintains vast supply and petrol depots;

possesses troop-carrying units and bridge companies which transport pontoons and stores for the R.E. It operates motor-boat companies for operations on rivers and inland waters. Most of the vehicles are 3-ton lorries, organised into sections under a subaltern with from twenty to forty vehicles. Each section is provided with a light machine gun and anti-tank repeater gun, and all ranks are armed. On several occasions M.T. columns have driven troops to within point-blank range of the enemy. One such occasion was when the Corps convoyed a brigade of British Infantry to deliver a surprise attack on a strongly held Italian position in front of Bardia. The journey of 280 miles from far back on the Mersa Matruh road was undertaken by compass and the stars at night. The Italian position commanded the plain for miles around, so that the infantry could not be dismounted and deployed under cover. The lorries were driven straight at the Italian position to within 200 to 500 yards, the last part of the journey under a shower of aircraft bombs, shells and bullets. Before the lorries could be dispersed, 71 out of 100 had been knocked out and one-fourth of the drivers had become casualties. But the R.A.S.C. enabled the infantry to seize the position with a large bag of prisoners then conveyed to our rear by



the remnants of the M.T. company.

One of the greatest feats of engineering and organisation in the history of the world, known as "Operation Pluto" (pipe-line under the ocean), was a wholly British achievement. The supply of oil for the Allied armies was one of the great problems confronting the High Command. After exhaustive experiments, special pipes were designed and laid on the ocean bed from the English coast, first to the tip of the Cherbourg peninsula soon after D-day, and later to Boulogne. The R.E. built and the R.A.S.C. operated a continuously lengthening series of pipelines which stretched from Boulogne to Antwerp, to Eind-

hoven, to Emmerich, and soon 1,000,000 gallons a day were being pumped from the Mersey, where Transatlantic tankers emptied, to the Rhine. A special petroleum unit of the R.A.S.C. was formed to maintain the supplies of "Operation Pluto," involving a pipeline of over 1,000 miles in length, by which the entire requirements of Field Marshal Montgomery's armies were met.

In peacetime, the R.A.S.C. not only brings essential supplies, but is prompt in the delivery of all those amenities which make station and cantonment life overseas so enjoyable. Whether it be a gymkhana or a boxing tournament, a regimental dance or a regatta, the R.A.S.C., in

friendly co-operation with the units concerned, delivers the goods, and there is no difficulty the corps will not overcome. To reach a small garrison perched high among rocky mountains, it is legendary that the R.A.S.C. procured a man of superhuman strength to carry a grand piano on his back for some fifty miles up the rugged path from railhead, in order that the men so far removed from civilisation might have the music they desired. No corps has been the subject of so much abuse—those “grouses” for which British soldiers are famous—as has the R.A.S.C. It may be that they have inherited something from the most intractable of animals, the mule, with which they were so long asso-

ciated. In the days of horse transport, shoeing-smiths were almost invariably old soldiers who had spent some time in India, and it was said they always addressed their mules in Urdu, since the English language lacked a sufficient vocabulary of “endearment.” Be this as it may, when supply officers are besieged by regimental quartermasters, all utterly selfish in the interests of their own units, to satisfy all, and yet maintain friendly and sound relationships with each, and between themselves, is a task calling for delicate treading, far more sure than that proverbially associated with the mule, and for infinite tact and patience, besides administrative ability of a high order.



## India and Africa Breed and Make Men

A MAN must have been east of Malta before he is qualified to sit in judgment on the British army. The regiments of Aldershot, Salisbury Plain, and of the barracks which were familiar in peacetime can no more compare with the seasoned men who have seen service in India and Africa, of whom no conscript army has ever seen the like, than the routine of barrack and camp quarters at home can compare with the vigilance and stir of the restless East. That was so, at any rate, up till 1939, though the impression is not so marked now that in nearly every family circle there is at least one man who can relate of experiences in the East. Yet, so long as the British Empire endures as a great unifying and peace-giving

force, the British army will move up and down the length and breadth of Africa and India, as it has done since Clive decided there should be one king and not a score at war with one another in Hindustan—and that one neither French, nor Dutch, nor Portuguese.

### *From the East India Company*

It was the liking of the Englishman's Elizabethan ancestors for pepper that first brought John Company Bahadur to India on the last day of the year 1600. From the *chaukidars* and trained bands that first guarded the factories of the early merchants, there grew up side by side a British and an Indian army, whose regiments have fought shoulder to shoulder in campaigns in

India itself, on its turbulent frontiers, in China, Somaliland, during the Great War against Germans and Turks in France, Mesopotamia and Palestine, and once again in Abyssinia, from Alamein to Tunis, and thereafter in Italy and in Burma. At Plassey, on 23rd June, 1757, Clive virtually won the Indian Empire for the British crown. Following the horror of the "Black Hole of Calcutta," with an army of no more than 1,000 British troops and 2,000 Sepoys, Clive met 50,000 foot and 14,000 horse of the treacherous Surajah Dowlah, threw them into confusion with his guns, and then completely routed them by a determined British charge. "Conspicuous in the ranks of this little army," wrote the great historian, Lord Macaulay, "were the men of the Thirty-Ninth Regiment (Dorsetshire Regt.), which still bears on its colours the proud motto: "*Primus in Indis*."

It is often said that courage is the greatest of the virtues, and if the people of these islands have sometimes seemed lacking in certain qualities, courage is not one of them. And courage has been defined by Lord Moran in his study of its anatomy as "will-power; calm intelligent assessment of probabilities, contempt of danger." We went to India as traders, not as conquerors. We established our Imperial sovereignty in pursuit of peaceful com-

merce, and in Treaty relations with the great Indian Principalities, whose states have never been British territory and whose inhabitants are not British subjects. During the past two centuries, the safety and welfare of the 360 million peoples of India have been dependent upon the British and Indian armies, and during the unhappy Indian Mutiny of 1857, almost upon the British army alone.

No one has better portrayed the character and life of our soldiers in India than has Rudyard Kipling. The "Soldiers Three"—Mulvaney, Leary, and Ortheris—are true to type. It will not be a good day for India should British troops ever be withdrawn. But it behoves those who will in future maintain the great traditions of the *Sirkar* to enter more fully into Indian life and to learn—for their own profit, too—much more of Indian philosophies and ways of life than has in the past been the habit of British soldiers in their segregated cantonments.

### *The Indian Mutiny*

The Indian Mutiny, 1857–59, had many causes, though its immediate outbreak was due to a single incident, the use "culpably and ignorantly" of cow-tallow as grease for the new rifled musket issued to the Bengal army. An appalling massacre at Meerut of European men, women and children



initiated widespread disorder throughout India. The first mutineers marched on Delhi, the ancient capital of the Moghul emperors, there to continue their butcheries by fire and sword. Mutineers went into open rebellion throughout India, committing appalling atrocities.

In the presence of a crisis so unprecedented and so overwhelming, with only a small though reliable army for the purpose, the Government decided to strike at Delhi. Here, the fate of India was in the balance. British troops, established on the famous Ridge, withstood many strong sorties from the fortress during a blazing June, enduring a perpetual bombardment by gunners who had huge ammunition magazines at their disposal within the fortress. Our losses were heavy, but those of the mutineers were far more serious. If the city was to be taken before the mutinous garrison was further reinforced, it must be accomplished before war and disease had thinned our ranks beyond the effective point.

Said John Nicholson, a name to conjure with in the Punjab and described by Lord Roberts as "the beau-ideal of a soldier and a gentleman," to his advance party of infantry: "Remember what Sir Colin Campbell said at Chilianwala, and you have heard that he said the same to his Highland

Brigade at the Alma. I have the same request to make of you. . . . Hold your fire till you are within twenty or thirty yards, then fire and charge, and the position is yours."

Delhi fort was protected by a sloping glacis, a deep ditch, and rising sheer from this the precipitous wall. Our cannon opened the bombardment. The regiments taking part in the assault included the King's Liverpools, the Munster Fusiliers, the Oxford and Bucks Light Infantry, the 60th Rifles and the 9th Lancers. Of 39 men in one column, carrying ladders with which to scale the walls, 29 were killed or wounded by the first volley from the walls. Their comrades seized the ladders and swarmed into the breach. They raced along the ramparts to the bastions, from which they turned the guns on to the mutineers in the street.

In the attack on the Kashmir Gate, on which to this day the scars of bullets remain, the bridge over the ditch was down, but a single beam remained, over which the sappers heroically swarmed to lay the powder charges with which to destroy the gate. Before their work was completed most of the gallant party had fallen. With them was Bugler Hawthorn of the 52nd Foot (O.B.L.I.). As soon as the explosion had occurred, Hawthorn sounded the regimental call of the 52nd, and under the heaviest fire

attended to the wounds of his officer while his regiment passed over the blood-stained beam. The assaulting columns met within the city, where bitter fighting took place in the far-famed "Street of Silver," the Chandi Chouk, where the mutineers were assembled in great strength. Here Lance Corporal Henry Smith that day earned a second V.C. for his regiment by bringing in wounded under heavy fire.

The siege and storm of Delhi remains one of the noblest feats of arms in British annals. The price paid had been heavy, including the loss of Nicholson at the head of his men. At Cawnpore, a massacre of the most revolting and teacherous kind had occurred, and here a memorial garden has since been laid out.

### *Relief of Lucknow*

After Cawnpore had been re-taken, the assault upon Lucknow was begun, where British troops, besieged in the Residency and undergoing the greatest hardships, were relieved.

The success of the British attack was largely owing to the superb gallantry of the 93rd (Sutherland) Highlanders, fighting in feather bonnets, scarlet doublets, kilt and sporran, who drove the main body of mutineers from their strongest fortified position at the point of the bayonet. Their deep-throated cries of

"Cawnpore ! You bloody murderers !" have no counterpart in our military annals, unless it be the grim silence with which British soldiers witnessed the awful horrors perpetrated by Himmler's S.S. guards at Belsen in April, 1945. Early in 1862, the mutiny had been crushed, and Sir Colin Campbell commanded the most efficient European army that India had ever seen, with a force at his disposal of 20,000 men and 180 guns.

### *At the Khyber Pass*

It is on the North-West Frontier, where the famous Khyber Pass breaks through the barren mountain fastnesses of the warlike Afridis and Pathans, that units of the British army have almost continuously been on active service. The prospect of easy loot, the possibility of a lovely bride, and more than all else the hope of acquiring the greatest prize of all in the shape of a magazine rifle, are altogether too great a temptation for the hardy men of the Afghan borders. Their courage is dauntless ; they can climb like cats and cover immense distances among the hills, whose sparse tracks they know so well, with no sustenance other than a handful of rice and a few *chapattis* (pancakes) rolled in a cloth. As Moslems, when exhorted by their priests to a *Jehad* (Holy war) they will fight with fanatic fury, believing that by death they will win to Paradise.

British soldiers, well organised and led, have proved their match, for in Kipling's words :

"There is neither east nor west,  
border, nor breed, nor birth,  
When two strong men stand  
face to face, tho' they come  
from the ends of the earth!"

Sometimes, beyond mere punitive expeditions against marauders, we have been obliged to enter upon serious campaigning. Twice we have fought Afghanistan, and, in the second campaign, Roberts made his famous march from Kabul to Kandahar, from which he took his title. There was the Malakand Field Force and others like it, and hard campaigning with tough fighting in Chitral, the Tirah, and more recently in the Mohmand country. On the other side of India we have fought in Burma, Assam and in the Nagar Hills, where once again British and Indian troops, resolutely assisted by tribesmen, drove out the Japanese invaders.

The training of the British army in the east serves to produce men fit and able to undertake those garrison duties as the result of which warlike communities, or ones in which racial and religious passions may suddenly be roused to fractricidal strife, may dwell peacefully together. The necessary qualities are attained not only through perfection in handling weapons and in tactical manœuvres, but by that discipline of character which

sets an example of courtesy, forbearance and good humour. Ultimately, the training is designed for the use of force of arms when other measures fail.

### *Chitral and the Tirah*

From our many campaigns and battle actions in India and on the frontier, it is difficult to select incidents to illustrate the fascinating and exciting story. Perhaps the most arduous campaign was that undertaken to Chitral, in which, among others, the Buffs, the Gordon Highlanders, the 60th Rifles, and the K.O.S.Bs. played a distinguished part. The operations took place among mountains rising to 16,000 feet, entailing the crossing of passes up to 12,000 feet, over rough roads which often had to be constructed by the pioneers before the transport could make headway. At one pass our troops, with their mule transport, descended a sheer precipitous slope of over 1,000 feet, down which they lowered the clerk accompanying the expedition, a *babu* weighing 19 stone, rolled up in sheets at the end of a rope. The object of the Field Force was the relief of the hard-pressed garrison in Chitral, threatened by fanatical Pathans, who sniped our columns continuously during their long march through the mountains. A pitched battle was fought on the Malakand Pass against 12,000 tribesmen, obstinately holding

the *sangars* — skilfully positioned, loop-holed stoneworks — against our bayonet charges, while their supporters rolled down immense boulders upon our advancing infantry.

On one occasion, in a *mêlée*, a British major and a Pathan wrestled in death grips. They had closed with one another, rolling on the ground, the tribesman his great knife in hand, the officer unable to withdraw his revolver from its holster. He grabbed at the menacing knife, only to receive a vicious wound across the palm of the hand; but his fingers found the Pathan's wrist, and he held on, calling for aid. A fellow officer, detached for a moment in the bloody struggle, ran the Pathan through the body with his sword but could not withdraw it. The tribesman fought on with all his dying strength, endeavouring to throttle his opponent or free his knife for its deadly back thrust. Almost stifled by the brown fingers at his throat, the major made a supreme effort and wrested the knife from the Pathan's grip, with which he immediately cleft his opponent's skull to the chin.

The trouble on the frontier had been confined to Chitral, but in 1897 it flared up along the length of the border towns to Baluchistan, where the Political Officer was shot dead and his escort lost three British officers killed and three wounded. The Afridis captured

our forts at Landi Kotal and Ali Masjid, situated respectively at the head and centre of the Khyber Pass. The Orakzais, inhabiting the high plateau of Tirah, had always considered their mountain fastnesses to be inviolable, and boasted that it was impossible for us to lift their *pardah*.

An action, to which much glamour has always been attached, was that in which the Gordon Highlanders, by a charge, ejected Afridi tribesmen from the heights of Dargai. Their colonel called to them: "Men of the Gordon Highlanders, the General has ordered that position to be taken at any cost. The Gordon Highlanders will take it!" Commenting upon their success the general commanding remarked: "When I gave orders for the taking of Dargai by the Gordon Highlanders, it was said to me that I might as well attempt to take an army up into the clouds." For his heroism in continuing to play "Cock o' the North," after being crippled in both legs by a shot, Piper Findlater won the V.C. The other British regiments which took part in the Tirah expedition were battalions of the Devonshire's, Notts. and Derby's, Dorset's, Northampton's, the Yorkshire Regiment and the Royal West Surrey's.

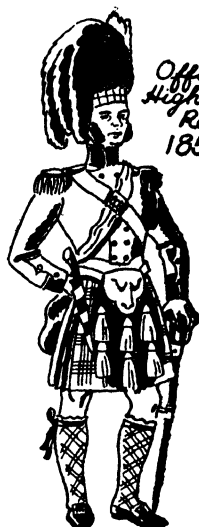
So strong a bond of comradeship developed between the K.O.S.Bs. and the 3rd Gurkha Rifles during this campaign



*Trooper,  
Horse  
Guards,  
1825*



*Private of  
Foot Regt.  
1844.*



*Officer,  
Highland  
Regt.  
1850*

that, ever since, the officers have been honorary members of one another's messes, and fraternisation between all ranks has continued wherever they have met. That, indeed, is typical of the relationships between not only the Indian and the British army, but of the comradeship of British soldiers with those of the Sudan Defence Force, the West Africa Frontier Force, the King's African Rifles—permanently established—and with native levies wherever raised. As the popular song has it: "There's something about a soldier . . . that's fine, fine, fine!" and those who have served alongside British soldiers have always found them so.

#### *A Playground Paradise*

It is in India, and especially on her frontiers, far removed

from the amenities of Western civilisation, that the virile youngster—and the veteran, too—experiences all the thrills of a soldier's life. He soon acquires a sufficient smattering of the language, in cantonment slang called "The Bat"—Hindu or Urdu—for the acquisition of standards, in which also there are substantial money awards, as a passport to adventures unknown at home. The teeming bazaars, stately temples and mosques, and richly ornamented antiquities dating from an Aryan civilisation already hoary with age when Britons yet danced in woad, are filled with novelty and exciting interest. For its military expeditions, the Government has purchased or hired thousands of camels and even elephants with which to drag the pontoon

trains ; and they are daily to be seen piled with merchandise, linked to a plough on the paddy fields, or superbly caparisoned bearing a Maharaja to a Durbar. On a few days' leave, a party of two or three can go fishing for mahseer, the salmon of Indian rivers, which has been known to turn the scale at 93 lbs. ; or a subaltern can go out with his rifle after black-buck antelope, or with a gun to shoot quail, sand-grouse, and the enormous variety of water-birds which throng the Indian rivers and swamps. More ambitious expeditions are undertaken among the mountains of Kashmir, Kumaon, and Sikkim, to hunt ibex, goral, deer, bears, markhor and a variety of agile mountain sheep, while a leopard can be bagged within a mile or two of almost any military station. Mountaineering among the high Himalayan peaks increases its lure, and in 1936 a corporal led an expedition which conquered Nanda Devi, 25,660 feet, the highest peak in British-administered territory.

At every station in the plains there are race meetings for both professional and amateur riders, and polo matches invite large and enthusiastic crowds. Cricket and football are played everywhere. Hockey is immensely popular in India, the native teams excelling, and easily winning the Olympic Games championships whenever they have com-

peted. Boxing and athletics are keenly followed, and those who have any gift for music and the drama can always find a place in the round of concerts and theatricals.

The promotion and supervision of sports is under the Army Sports Control Board, with its own officers appointed throughout the channels of command. They work closely with the Welfare Officers and with the Directorate of Physical Training, whose headquarters in Britain have for long been at the Army School of Physical Training at Aldershot and at Umbala in India. The Board of Education has adopted many of the methods pioneered by the permanent staff at Aldershot, among whom Colonel R. B. Campbell and Brigadier Wand-Tetley were notable contributors. There has always been a considerable demand in civil life for instructors trained in the army. There are opportunities for both sea and river boating and bathing at many stations. The collector, too, has boundless opportunities, with butterflies of brilliant colouring, gaily plumaged birds and a vast variety of plants, animals and reptiles. He must be a very dull lad, indeed, who is unable to fill his leisure hours with much to stimulate the mind and invigorate the body.

The conditions of Indian service apply generally to those of Africa. Active service in this

vast continent includes the Zulu War, 1880 ; Egypt, 1882 ; the bloodless campaign in Ashanti, 1885 ; the Nile Expedition to the relief of Gordon, 1884-5, which failed in its mission ; the Matabele Rebellion, 1896 ; the well-organised and victorious campaign in the Sudan, 1897 ; and the war against the Boers in South Africa, 1899-1902. Zulus, Sudanese, and Boers were found to be formidable foes, albeit with vastly different fighting methods. The Zulu and Matabele armies were well organised under such capable commanders as Dinizulu and Cetawayo, who brought immense hordes of brave warriors in their *impis*, mostly armed with assegais, using a two-horned tactical approach to their enemies, similar to the "pincer movements" exploited by Stalin's army commanders. Their headlong rushes, accompanied by terrifying yells even in the face of withering fire, might make the stoutest heart quail, and there was no final answer until the production of the machine gun during the Matabele War—witness the disaster which befell British arms at Isandhlwana, and our narrow escape, due to extraordinary heroism, at Rorke's Drift.

### *Gordon and Kitchener at Khartoum*

In the spirit of King Henry V at Agincourt, Charles Gordon in the last days of the eleven

months' seige of Khartoum wrote : "I am here like iron," and again : "The Almighty God will help me," the last message that ever came from the beleaguered city. He fell at his post, the classic example of what men of our stock should mean by duty, loyalty and service. None will ever rival Gordon as a great legendary figure, clothed alike in mystery and majesty.

Another great soldier made his name in the Sudan. Twice when a young officer, Kitchener had attired himself in native garb, penetrating far into hostile country spying out the land, as did Lawrence of Arabia throughout his remarkable exploits in the leadership of Arab tribesmen during the Great War, to be repeated by dauntless explorers and the Long Range Desert Group in 1940-43, as the eyes and ears of our armies in Libya. There is an Eastern saying : "Kiss thou the edge of the sword." Without fear, Kitchener raised the curved scimitar to his lips and went forward into the Sudan at the head of 22,000 British and native troops, to liberate the Nile Valley from the tyranny of the Khalifa and his Dervish hordes. The Battle of Omdurman, in which the Khalifa's army of 60,000 men was driven from the field in disorder, leaving 10,563 corpses on the ground, was decisive in African history. An unprecedented era of enlightenment

and prosperity has followed—with such soldier's names as Wingate, Stack, and Huddleston to gild the way—the focus of which is the Gordon College at Khartoum and that sure guard, the Sudan Defence Force, to which many British officers and N.C.Os. are seconded for a period of their service. The British army is responsible for training and supplying leadership to many similar bodies of troops and police throughout the Empire, and there are frequent opportunities of transfer for young men of character and ability.

#### *South African War, 1899–1902*

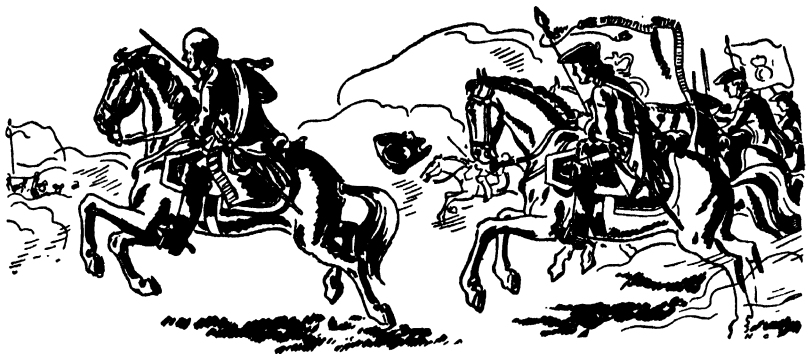
The war against the two Boer Republics in South Africa was deep-seated in origin. At its outset, British arms were met with a series of disasters, due largely to a training and equipment quite unsuited to operations against a skilled and elusive foe, making full use of the *kopjes* and Commando raiding tactics of which they were past masters. The long-drawn-out sieges of Ladysmith, Kimberley and Mafeking for a while threatened our military prestige throughout the world. Our men suffered far heavier losses from dysentery and enteric fever than in action, though our killed and wounded at Colenso and Magersfontein were out of all proportion to those inflicted on the enemy and to the results. It was an arduous campaign for British

troops, in which there were many acts of conspicuous gallantry and devotion to duty; nor did we obtain success until Kitchener had established his Blockhouse Line. Among the acts which captured the public imagination was that of Bugler Dunne of the Dublin Fusiliers, a lad of only fourteen years of age, who insisted on accompanying the column in the advance on Colenso; and, while sounding the "Advance," was wounded during the attempt to force the passage of the Tugela.

Both Generals Botha and Jan Smuts, in later years to become foremost among Empire statesmen, the latter a Field Marshal of the British army, played a leading part on the Boer side in this campaign. The bitterest battle was probably that fought in 1900 on Spion Kop, from whose summit both sides retired, though General Botha, meeting the retreating Boers, forced them to return, where they remained in possession.

In retrospect, we observe with gratitude and with thanks that twice this great Dominion of South Africa has sent her legions to fight at our side against Germany; and that, wherever else in Africa British arms have won great territories for the Empire, the native inhabitants have voluntarily come forward in their thousands to fight for common liberties at our side.





# *The Cavalry Charge and Armoured Drive—*

## *Science and Medicine*

EMERGING from the mediæval knights, and thereafter from Cromwell's Roundheads, to whose horsemen at Marston Moor the King's army was "as stubble to the swords," the Cavalry, or Horse, as it was then called, became part of the standing army at the Restoration. The Life Guards and other Horse were armed with carbines, whence the 6th Dragoon Guards yet carry the name of "The Carabineers." Marlborough, being a great advocate of shock tactics, maintained that the sword was the arm of British cavalry. Dragoons were the handymen of the army; their training as mounted infantry included firing from the saddle, and, "being strong,

bold horsemen," their use was recommended in the text-books of the time "for swift marches, passing deep ways or waters" and forming escorts to convoys, and, when campaigning, for posting where "the greatest danger seems to threaten."

In addition to the Life Guards, who fought at Dettin- gen and helped to cover the retreat after Fontenoy, there were in 1742 eight regiments of Horse: "The Blues," 1st King's Dragoon Guards, the Queen's Bays, and the 4th to 8th Horse, which later became Dragoon regiments. The Hus- sar regiments originated as light cavalry in distinction from the more heavily mounted dragoons, and up till the close

of the Great War the army possessed 12 Hussar, 8 Dragoon and 5 Lancer regiments, among whom were shared all the battle honours claimed by the British army.

*"Going bald-headed for it"*

George II of the United Kingdom was also Elector of Hanover. During our protracted wars with France in the 18th century, the French decided in 1760 to strike a blow at Britain in her German territory. There was fought at Warburg a memorable battle, particularly interesting because it provided ideal conditions in which to deliver a cavalry attack, and because an amusing incident gave birth to a phrase likely to endure in the English language for all time.

The French, smarting under their crushing defeat at Minden in the previous year, had marshalled 130,000 men to meet a combined British and German army 60,000 strong, in which there were twelve British regiments of cavalry and fourteen of infantry under General the Marquis of Granby. The French army, a colourful spectacle, was drawn up on a ridge, and after some hard preliminary fighting it was decided to attack the French line with the whole mounted force of 22 squadrons of British cavalry under Lord Granby.

Granby drew rein on the opposite ridge about a mile distant from the French, and

deployed to attack, the Dragoon Guards brigade on the right, the brigade of Horse on the left and two brigades of Dragoons as a second line behind. Among the British cavalry in their scarlet coats were the K.D.Gs., the 2nd and 3rd Dragoon Guards, the Scots Greys, 10th Hussars, 5th Inniskilling Dragoon Guards, the 11th Hussars, and the Blues.

At the centre of his army rode Lord Granby, a big, burly man on a large black horse. As the pace of the charge quickened, his hat and wig flew from his head, leaving a bald scalp which flashed in the sun. Utterly careless, he rode faster, with drawn sword, crouched above the mane of his great black horse, "going bald-headed for it," with 22 squadrons of British cavalry thundering down the slope behind him. The French squadrons and battalions sought to wheel out of line: but as Granby and his cavalry breasted the slope, the French were caught in disorder and driven in panic before the British, only to be saved from complete rout for the moment by the devotion of the Bourbon Cavalerie and a Swiss regiment of foot, which in their turn were then almost annihilated. George II was so delighted that he commissioned a great painting by Sir Joshua Reynolds showing the Marquis standing bald-headed by his big black horse; and the picture hangs in the ante-room at

St. James's Palace, where young officers have always assembled at levées before making their bow to the King. There was much roisterous celebration among the British force in Germany, Lord Granby providing at his own expense enough good English ale for all his troops. All over England, too, there was much rejoicing, and many English inns carry the name of the Marquis of Granby to this day in his honour.

### *British Cavalry in Action*

One of the most spectacular cavalry actions was that in which the 21st Lancers were detailed by Kitchener at Omdurman, 1897, to rout out Mahmud's Dervish warriors threatening our flank from Gebel Surgham. Attached to the Lancers was Lieutenant Winston Spencer Churchill of the 4th Hussars.

The trumpets sang out the order and the 21st troopers swung into their first charge. Between the Lancers and the enemy there yawned suddenly a deep ravine, out of which sprang a horde of Dervishes, brandishing swords and spears, some 3,000 of them against 400 Lancers riding knee to knee. Horses plunged and blundered, Dervishes on the ground waiting for the hamstring cut. Officers pistoled them in passing over, while troopers thrust till lances broke, then cut. The cavalry surged through, leaving many

men behind fighting desperately with screaming fanatics until they were cut to pieces. There were in those moments many deeds of heroism, as when Lieutenant de Montmorency, missing his troop-sergeant, rode back into the blood-bath and, losing his horse, on which he had placed the body of a brother officer, was left alone to fight the infuriated Bagaras with his revolver. Saved by his captain and a corporal, who in their turn had gone to his rescue, Lieutenant de Montmorency won the V.C. for his gallantry.

The cavalry played a conspicuous part in the South African War, notably at Klip Drift, where an avalanche of the 9th and 16th Lancers under General French broke upon the Boers with terrible vehemence, an action which opened up the relief of Kimberley. But already artillery fire and well-posted marksmen were demonstrating that the days of the horse soldier were numbered and their fame lay behind them.

The cavalry have given many distinguished leaders to the British Army, among whom may be counted Field Marshal Lord French of Ypres and Field-Marshal Lord Haig of Bemersyde, the successive Commanders-in-Chief of the victorious British armies in the Great War. In this campaign, during the first days of the retreat from Mons, the cavalry

played its part in covering the infantry retirement. It was, however, as mounted infantry that the cavalry contributed their best service, both in October-November 1914, and in March-August, 1918, by filling gaps in the line. The cavalry regiments were also used on foot as reserves.

Only once after 1914, until the use of small patrols shortly before the Armistice, were our cavalry in action as mounted men. It was on July 15, 1916, when the first assault was made against the ridge at the centre of which stood High Wood during the Battle of the Somme. Detachments of the 7th Dragoon Guards and the Deccan Horse, intended as the spear-point of masses of cavalry held in leash in the heavily shelled valleys three miles behind, attempted to break through the German line. Galloping towards the slope, no troops could have presented a more inspiring sight than did this mad cavalcade. They became the butt of every gun and rifle; but, lifting their mounts lightly over yawning shell holes, turning and twisting through the barrage, and aided by a friendly monoplane, those who survived succeeded in establishing themselves in a strong point, where they held prisoners, and, besides which, they had slain forty Germans with lance or sabre.

In order to secure a high level in horse mastery, the equita-

tion schools at Weedon and Saugor in India were set up. No badge was more eagerly sought after or more jealously guarded than the interlocked stirrup and spur of the Roughrider, gained by cavalry soldiers in these schools. Further to serve the variety of needs of the army's transport animals before the petrol age, the Royal Army Veterinary Corps was instituted, and made responsible for the welfare of the animals of cavalry regiments and the yeomanry, as well as for those of the R.A.S.C. and infantry transport. Veterinary officers were attached to each cavalry regiment, and were on the staff of higher formations; and in our many campaigns have been responsible for the well-being of horses, mules and donkeys, camels, and even elephants.

### *The Royal Armoured Corps*

Centuries of sentiment had been gathered into the cavalry tradition; and it was long argued that, with our victory in Europe, an arm should be retained from horsemen who had rendered such conspicuous services in lands wherein we were not required to fight under European conditions. Wiser counsels prevailed, for the Army Council realised that the modern army must mirror the complex and technical society from all strata of which it is drawn. The era of mechanisation had arrived. In the

British army its development was slow, for after four years of prodigal expenditure in armaments Parliament was unwilling to vote much for experimentation; nor could the army undergo such vital changes in equipment, to be equally of service in the European field, on sandy deserts, among mountains, and in jungles.

When the infantry was equipped with Bren carriers and to a certain extent motorised, it was realised that, in order to regain its essential mobility, the cavalry must also be revolutionised. Thus, excepting for the Household Cavalry, so picturesquely to furnish the popular ceremonials in Whitehall, and the Royal Scots Greys, the Armoured Corps swallowed up the cavalry; but, as history has proved, the latter was to lose nothing of its grand traditions and fighting spirit.

Into the Royal Armoured Corps had also been gathered the Royal Tank Regiment. Since the invention of the tank, the men serving this weapon had borne a variety of titles. Originally, at Thetford in 1916, they had been known as the Armoured Car Section of the Motor Machine Gun Corps. In 1917 they had become the Heavy Section Machine Gun Corps, and were organised in battalions, then to become known as the Tank Corps. Its first operation on a grand scale

was the Battle of Cambrai in October, 1917, when General Hugh Elles led the attack at the centre in the flag tank, the "Hilda," with Lt.-Colonel J. F. C. Fuller as chief staff officer. Some lines from *Paradise Lost* are appropriate:—

"On they move  
Indissolubly firm; nor obvious  
hill  
Nor straightening vale, nor wood  
nor stream divides  
Their perfect ranks."

But it was a *Paradise Regained*, for the introduction of tanks ended the stagnation of trench warfare and re-introduced mobility. After the defeat of the enemy, Elles sent a telegram to Swinton—"All ranks thank you. Your show."

With the end of the war the prefix Royal was added to the Corps title. As mechanisation throughout the army came more to the fore, the Royal Tank Regiment was gathered within the R.A.C., becoming in effect the "Heavy Cavalry," and the former Dragoon, Hussar and Lancer Regiments, now mechanised, becoming the "Light." The latter recaptured all their ancient glory during the retreat upon Dunkirk, when, for example, the 12th Lancers, commanded by Colonel Herbert Lumsden—as noted a horseman as a tank leader, for he had ridden two years earlier in the Grand National—received special mention in Lord Gort's Dispatches for their heroic exploits. Lumsden, as a

lieutenant-general, was unfortunately killed on the bridge of a battleship in the Pacific, while observing a landing by General MacArthur's forces.

### *High Adventure*

It was ever thus; the call to high adventure echoed down the ages as a trumpet blast in the ears of the British army. Do we not find British officers again and again attempting the conquest of the world's highest peak, Mount Everest, under the leadership of General C. G. Bruce? Did not General Sir Bernard Freyberg, V.C., a New Zealander trained in the Grenadier Guards, wounded nine times in the Great War, commander of the desperate venture in Crete in 1941, and of the 2nd New Zealand Expeditionary Force, attempt when a colonel, without special training, to swim the English Channel, and come within a mile of Dover, only to be frustrated by evil tides? And, long ago, the dashing Colonel Burnaby, slain in the attempt to relieve Gordon at Khartoum, had ridden on horseback alone across the Caucasian Mountains and steppes to Khiva; and Colonel Sir Richard Burton, a Cornishman and a supreme Orientalist, had accomplished a remarkable journey to Mecca and Medina, being one of the very select band of non-Moslems to visit the sacred cities of Islam. The texture of the British army is always the

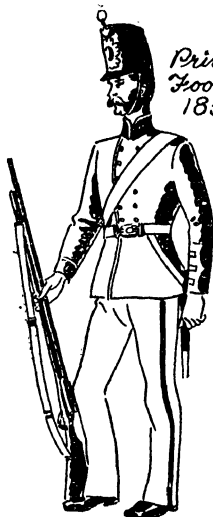
same, though its patterns and colouring may change. The spirit of the Royal Armoured Corps was informed by that of its predecessors; and if but one example be taken from its history, already a book on an heroic scale, it is to be found in the amazing series of exploits by the 11th Hussars in Libya.

### *Tank and Anti-Tank*

One of the most famous of Divisional signs in the British army was that of the "Desert Rats." The Division fought its way three times backwards and forwards across the sands of Libya, thence through the mountains to Tunis, across Sicily and into the heart of the Apennines, and then to Normandy, through France and Belgium into Germany. For an armoured division the desert was found to be ideal battlefield. But on the African deserts the tank met its master in the anti-tank gun, often mounted on another tank. The appearance of this weapon for a while changed the rôle of the tank as the spear-head of the attack; and the tactics employed were to lure the opposing tanks on to one's own anti-tanks. This was the fate which, on 30th August, 1942, befell Field Marshal Rommel, the chief exponent of Panzer warfare, when, expecting to annihilate the British army, his own armour was wrecked by salvoes from British anti-



*Officer  
of  
Cavalry.  
1853*



*Private of  
Foot Regt.  
1855.*



*Officer of  
Guards.  
1886.*

tank guns and tanks lying in hull-down positions on the ground.

The "Desert Rats" found a second obstacle to mobility in the minefields, whose power to delay and to limit manoeuvre is even more effective than that of destruction. But provided mobility could be maintained by supplies of fuel—often brought by air—tank opportunities arose, as they did in May, 1943, when three armoured divisions were flung through a gap cleared by the infantry with the object of breaking enemy communications and tearing up his whole system of supply. In this respect armour had entirely regained the former rôle of

cavalry. Tanks have had to take their place in street fighting and to sustain the infantry under the worst conditions of mud and water. But British armour has always taken full advantage of its opportunities—as, for example, in the drive from the Seine, to Amiens, Brussels and Antwerp, when, giving no time for the positioning of anti-tank guns or the laying of minefields, they drove straight ahead, dislocating the entire enemy defence. More than one type of tank is required, and the future may discover whether perfection in dual-purpose tanks can be evolved to work with infantry and to operate with an armoured division.

### *The Royal Army Medical Corps*

In bygone days the cavalry captured most of the glamour, and there travelled far in its wake those who might tend the sick and succour the wounded. John Hunter, from a Scottish village, began his medical practice in the army in the middle of the 18th Century, to become the father of modern surgery. There is little of glamour in the practice of medicine, but there is great adventure. Medical progress owes more to the people of Britain than to any other race on earth. By its very nature, progress is always adventure, for all the hazards of risk and danger are there. If, therefore, the fury of the cavalry charge and the glint of the sun on helmet, breastplate and sabre, capture the eyes, and in later days the swift-moving armoured vehicles prove no less alluring, the long and patient research of the scientist in his laboratory equally enthralls the mind. It is fitting, therefore, to speak of the fight for life in the operating theatre in the same breath as that against great odds on the battlefield.

Prior to the Crimean War, 1854, the care of the sick and wounded had largely been left to look after itself, or to the more tender mercies of civilians, as often during Marlborough's wars, and in the Peninsular Campaign. Surgeons, holding military rank, had been posted

through the Army Medical Department to serve with British regiments, of whom many won distinctions on the battlefield. Mention may be made of Dr. A. D. Holme, who served with the 8th and 13th Hussars, and won the V.C. during the Indian Mutiny, dividing his duties between caring for the wounded and, when beleaguered in a blazing house, holding off the rebels with his pistol. He served in many campaigns, to become at length Surgeon-General.

The Crimea laid bare how quite inadequate was the organisation, however devoted and skilled were the doctors. The sufferings of our men from governmental neglect were met by an almost hysterical public response to supply the deficiencies in ambulances, hospitals, comforts and nurses. The mortality in our hospitals had reached an appalling height, especially as the result of sickness. But the Crimea was the beginning of reforms in sanitation and hygiene in the army which had a profound effect also upon practice at home.

The Royal Army Medical Corps was formed, with its chain of command under the Director-General at the War Office and with its counterpart throughout the Territorial Army. The corps possesses its own college in London, to which are attached the most distinguished physicians and surgeons in the country, for



instruction, especially in military surgery, tropical medicine, and for the study of specific fevers. All officers of the corps have qualified in the civilian medical schools before appointment to commissions ; while the rank and file, after training at Aldershot, become highly skilled as dispensers, in surgical dressings, in field sanitation and hygiene, to serve with field ambulances, in casualty clearing stations, and at base hospitals.

In battle, a wounded man usually receives his first attention from the regimental stretcher bearers, drawn from the bandsmen. He walks, or is carried, to an aid post, where his wounds are dressed, and he is hurried to the advanced dressing station, a mobile unit, usually tented, and sometimes installed in a large building some miles behind the firing line. As soon as he is able to be moved, perhaps after a first operation, he is sent by motor ambulance or hospital train to the main dressing station, in reality a field hospital, or to a base hospital ; or, as has been the practice in our last campaign in Africa and shortly after D-Day, may be conveyed by specially equipped aeroplanes direct to hospitals at home. The care of the sick and wounded has been carried to perfection. Our losses from sickness during the South African War were high ; during the Great War they were

enormously reduced, though deaths among the wounded continued at too high a level. Disease and epidemics have been checked almost to vanishing point, whereas prior to 1914 more men had died of disease than of bullets.

The advance of science and surgical practice during the 1939-45 war, has performed almost a miracle, for mortality among wounded has become quite exceptional. The introduction of the Blood Transfusion Service, carried out by special units operating among the mass of civilians at home and applied by regimental officers on the battlefield, has saved lives incalculable, as have the discovery of penicillin and application of "M and B." Head wounds, which under conditions of modern warfare had shown a marked increase, have been the subject of a special study directed by Major-General Professor H. W. B. Cairns, and again miracles have been performed by the neuro-surgical units, providing all facilities for modern brain surgery.

The contribution by the R.A.M.C. to medicine is one of the most remarkable stories in all its history. Lieut.-General Sir William Leishman was rewarded for years of labour by the great discovery of inoculation against typhoid, and this led to the foundation of a new hygiene of war. To Sir Ronald Ross, who served in the Indian Medical Service, retiring as a

major after 18 years' service, thereafter as a colonel R.A.M.C., lies the credit of relieving tropical and semi-tropical lands of one of their most terrible scourges, malaria. He made his remarkable discovery of the malaria-filaria and yellow-fever-bearing anopheles mosquitoes in August, 1898; and he thus describes his triumph:—

"I went to hospital at 7 a.m., examined my patients and attended to official correspondence. . . . After a hurried breakfast at the mess, I returned to dissect the cadaver (of Mosquito 36), but found nothing new in it. . . . At about 1 p.m. I determined to sacrifice the seventh anopheles of the batch fed on the 16th (Mosquito 38), although my eyesight was already fatigued. Only one more of my batch remained. . . . Nothing. No. These new mosquitoes also were going to be a failure, there was something wrong with the theory. But the stomach tissue still remained to be examined. . . . I was tired, and what was the use? I must have examined the stomachs of a thousand mosquitoes by this time. But the angel of fate fortunately laid his hand on my head, and I had scarcely begun to search again when I saw a clear and almost perfectly circular outline before me. . . ."

This was the malaria parasite, as Ross proved to the satisfac-

tion of the whole world. The prevention of malaria has been largely achieved by the destruction of the breeding places of the mosquito.

The work of Major-General Sir David Bruce was almost equally important. His research led to the identification of the organisms responsible for Mediterranean fever and tsetse fly disease, and he played an important part in the subsequent discovery of the causative organism of sleeping-sickness. On the practical side, resulting from the work of Mellanby and others in the civilian field, the R.A.M.C. has been responsible for raising the diet standard of the army, for improving the nutrition values in the "iron ration," and for bringing to a high art dehydrated foodstuffs, an essential to swift mechanised mobility in an army which must "move on its belly." Service in the R.A.M.C. is not only essential to the army's well-being, it is also one of constructive usefulness, of value for all time to mankind long after the cease fire has sounded on the battlefield.

The Royal Army Chaplains' department, divided into four classes under the Chaplain General to the Forces (ranking as Major-General) represents the Church of England, the Presbyterian Churches, Roman Catholics, Wesleyans, other Nonconformist bodies, and Jews. Many padres have won

distinction for gallantry in action ; with them lies the duty of conducting the burial service over the fallen. In this last respect, their work then passes to the Imperial War Graves Commission, in which is vested responsibility for laying out the war cemeteries, designing and erecting the battlefield memorials of a general character, and maintaining the gardens as shrines

for all time. The Commission was set up during the Great War, with Major-General Sir Fabian Ware as its director. There were 996,230 deaths from all causes among our men in this war, and the many cemeteries scattered over the globe are worthy of the deeds which they commemorate. The work has been carried on during the second World War.

### *The Dead*

Blow out, you bugles, over the rich Dead !

There's none of these so lonely and poor of old,

But, dying, has made us rarer gifts than gold.

These laid the world away ; poured out the red  
Sweet wine of youth ; gave up the years to be

Of work and joy, and that unhoped serene,

That men call age ; and those who would have been  
Their sons, they gave, their immortality.

Blow, bugles, blow ! They brought us, for our dearth,

Holiness, lacked so long, and Love and Pain.

Honour has come back, as a king, to earth,

And paid his subjects with a royal wage ;

And Nobleness walks in our ways again ;

And we have come into our heritage.

RUPERT BROOKE.



# *Courage of the Great War, 1914-1918*

## THE ZONNEBEKE ROAD

... Now where Haymarket starts,  
That is no place for soldiers with weak hearts ;

The minenwerfers have it to the inch.

Look, how the snow-dust whisks along the road

Piteous and silly ; the stones themselves must flinch

In this east wind ; the low sky like a load

Hangs over, a dead-weight. But what a pain

Must gnaw where its clay cheek

Crushes the shell-chopped trees that fang the plain—

The ice-bound throat gulps out a gargoyle shriek.

The wretched wire before the village line

Rattles like rusty brambles or dead bine,

And there the daylight oozes into dun ;

Black pillars, those are trees where roadways run.

Even Ypres now would warm our souls ; fond fool,

Our tours but one night old, seven more to cool !

O screaming dumbness, O dull clashing death,

Shreds of dead grass and willows, homes and men,

Watch as you will, men clench their chattering teeth

And freeze you back with that one hope, disdain.

EDMUND BLUNDEN.

THE story of the retreat from Mons and the battles fought by the first seven divisions of the British Expeditionary Force in France and Belgium

is an epic of our military history. Here are some incidents of "First Ypres" which show how our army fought. The human barrier at Ypres

can only be described as one of the most amazing marvels of history.

The German High Command's orders for the destruction of the British army were emphatic. An order of the day found on a dead German officer stated: "The breakthrough will be of decisive importance. We must and will conquer. . . . We will finish with the British, Indians, Canadians, Moroccans, and other trash — feeble adversaries."

An intercepted wireless message disclosed to British G.H.Q. the arrival of the Kaiser at the front. He was at La Tache, a few miles from Messines, when on October 3 strong German forces hurled themselves at one point against the K.R.R.C., the Queen's, Welch, South Wales Borderers and Scots Guards. With hoarse cries the Germans sprang to the charge, but for an hour were held at bay by superb fire control, the Germans believing that they were opposed by "automatic rifles," and reporting that "over every bush, hedge, and fragment of wall floated a film of smoke, betraying a machine gun rattling out bullets." But two German batteries, one firing high explosive and the other shrapnel, came to short range and literally blew the defenders back. The village of Gheluvelt went up in flames and descended in a mass of bricks

and rubble. The 1st Queens, surrounded, were shot down from front, flank and rear, only two officers and six men escaping; while, as if in a frenzy of fury at the enormous losses inflicted upon them, "to the everlasting disgrace of the 143rd German Infantry Regiment" wounded prisoners were stripped of their clothing, robbed of their personal possessions, and some were clubbed and bayoneted to death. *Pro patria mori*. To whom in this desperate battle might honours and awards be given?

Some idea of the appalling losses sustained by French's Army may be gathered from a bare recitation of casualties. For example, from a company of 130 men of the 2nd Welch who went into action on October 31, by 10.30 a.m. only 45 were left alive, and by 11.45 a.m. only 16 remained to fire their rifles. By November 11—momentous day—six battalions of the 2nd Brigade numbered only 22 officers and 1,001 men, and of these, the Irish Guards had but 153 of all ranks, and the 1st Loyal North Lancs, 1 officer and 8 men. But so stubborn was the resistance at Nonne Bosschen on this date that it is recorded that five cooks and duty men of the 5th Field Company R.E. who had been left in camp, stormed a house, took two prisoners, and hurled back some of the Prussian Guard. A wounded German officer,

captured on the western side of the wood, asked : "Where are your reserves ?" The answer was to point to a line of guns. Obviously disbelieving, the German enquired : "What is there behind ?" The reply was "Divisional Headquarters." From the depths of his heart the prisoner exclaimed in German, "God Almighty !" In the 1st Brigade at Nonne Bosschen, the 1st Scots Guards could muster only battalion headquarters and thirty-nine men ; of the 1st Black Watch, only one officer remained alive, and of the 1st Cameron Highlanders half the effectives were entirely wiped out. The losses on both sides were enormous, and in quality the troops were irreplaceable.

In summing up the character of the old Regular Army, which vanished after 1914, the official historian wrote : "The soldiers astonished even those who had trained them by their staunchness, their patience, their indomitable cheerfulness under incessant hardship, and in spite of fire which no human being had ever before experienced, by their calm, cool courage at all times. . . . Though their dearest friends, comrades of many years, fell beside them, they fought with all the majesty of their ancestors, without anger or malice, trusting always in the good cause of their country. Their good health in quagmires or trenches, under constant rains, of itself testified

to singular discipline. Sober, temperate and self-respecting, they were not discouraged by wounds or sickness. There should be no fear as to the final victory. . . ."

### *Epitaph on an Army of Mercenaries*

These, in the day when heaven  
was falling,  
The hour when earth's foundation  
fled,  
Followed their mercenary calling  
And took their wages and are  
dead.  
Their shoulders held the sky  
suspended ;  
They stood, and earth's foundations  
stay ;  
What God abandoned, these  
defended,  
And saved the sum of things  
for pay.

A. E. HOUSMAN.

### *"Hill 60," 1915 : The Majesty of the Private Soldier*

"Second Ypres" in the following year will always be associated with the introduction of gas against troops wholly unprepared to meet so barbarous a weapon. It was "an offence against the rules and usages of war," and led to its use on both sides, discharged from cylinders and conveyed in shells. Following the first German attack, there followed some of the most bloody fighting in the history of the war for the possession of Hill 60.

The 1st East Surrey Regiment and the Queen Victoria's Rifles (9th London Regiment) bore the brunt of the fighting,

especially the former. The 20th April was fine and hot, the day being spent in an endeavour to repair the damaged trenches. But at 3 p.m. the Germans delivered an attack from a sap head under the cover of snipers' fire from a strong point.

For a moment the position of the Surreys was full of danger. Making use of shell-holes, the Germans advanced, and at any moment might have overwhelmed the position had not Private E. Dwyer, with reckless courage, leaped upon the parapet so as to obtain a full view of the Germans crouching in the shell-holes awaiting the command—"*Vorwärts!*" and then subjected them to a hail of bombs, aimed with deadly accuracy at each group. For this signal act he received the V.C.

The battle had, however, only just begun. By 4 p.m. the little hill was covered with flame, smoke and dust, accompanied by incessant and deafening noise. The battered trenches became choked with dead, wounded and débris, all communication ceased. Battalion headquarters was destroyed by a shell, the C.O. killed, and only one corporal and a signaller survived. Lieutenant G. R. P. Roupell, with C.S.M. A. J. Reid, were holding the line, which was assailed again and again in a most desperate manner. Ammunition was running short, while heavy

losses were eating the heart out of the defence. Darkness fell, unrelieved by moon or stars, the night being made more hideous by the stench, pall of smoke and exploding ammunition. Into this fearsome night the sergeant major plunged in order to seek ammunition and reinforcements. He regained the trench supported by a body of Bedfords, and bearing fresh ammunition, in the nick of time. Meanwhile, Lieutenant Roupell had been several times wounded by shell-fire, but, with a company, continued to withstand German attacks. On his right, Corporal F. W. Adams, firing a machine gun alone, had become the king-pin of the defence. Although part of his jaw had been shot away, for a further half hour he remained in action until shot through the head and killed.

The Germans were, however, determined. Attack followed attack, sometimes by rushes, and more often by creeping over the broken ground and worming their way into the remnants of the communication trenches. The sergeant major had made repeated journeys for ammunition, and the party in the mine crater was joined by 2nd Lieutenant B. H. Geary, who immediately established communication between the survivors in the hard-pressed line, and in the teeth of very heavy fire brought more men to its support. He

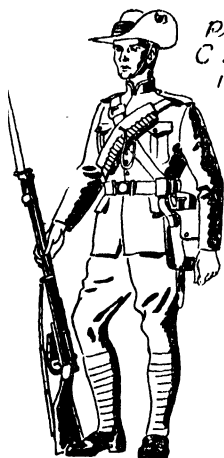
seemed to bear a charmed life, for, of those reinforcements, he was the only officer to pass unscathed through the curtain of fire. The crater itself became choked with dead and dying. On Geary's left, Roupell, during a momentary lull in the fighting, had his wounds dressed, and the surgeon begged him not to return to the line. But, with further reinforcements, this most courageous officer returned to his post.

A second night of horror unspeakable was now drawing on, and Roupell realised that without further help the handful of men under his command could not continue to hold the line. Though faint from loss of blood he again made the bitter and hazardous journey back to the reserve trenches and brought up reinforcements with whom he held the line during the night. Meanwhile Geary was making a desperate stand, single-handed, against Germans who sought to outflank his position by creeping up one of their old communication trenches. Aided by Private White, who acted as leader, Lieut. Geary shot them down one by one as they approached, sometimes at point-blank range. Having disposed of this threat, he dashed away to the right to reorganise the defence under a pitiless fire. Shortly before dawn, Geary again went back in search of reinforcements, but was severely wounded, losing one eye as the result.

Roupell, who had been wounded eight times during this night, again went back to bring up a party of the Bedfords, while Geary had made a joint attack with the Queen Victoria's Rifles in order to clear C Company's position. The Londoners, who in one section of the defence had only 20 men left and had lost all their officers, were for a while in a desperate situation. Hearing that the post was beleaguered, 2nd Lieutenant G. H. Woolley, now a parson and for long a master at Harrow School, was seen to make his way across the bullet-swept zone towards them. Men held their breath as they saw him go, expecting every moment to see him fall and rise no more. But, sometimes running, at others creeping, Woolley reached the trench, and, by his accurate bomb-throwing, held the German hordes at bay until relief came. He was the first Territorial Force officer to win the V.C. Of the others who had taken part in this amazing fight, Roupell and Geary were both awarded the V.C., and C.S.M. Reid, with six others, the D.C.M. So ended the prelude to one of the most terrible battles of all history.

There was no halt in the battle. The German General Staff cannot have been much elated by the foul experiment, for General Balck notes that "The losses of the troops, particularly in officers, had been very heavy." Under repeated





*Private  
C.I.V.  
1900*



*Private of  
Foot Regt.  
1914.*



*Gunner,  
Field  
Artillery,  
1918.*

attacks the British were forced to withdraw to the Frezenberg Ridge. Continuing to exploit the deadly chlorine, on May 2, the Germans again delivered a violent assault. The 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers in front of Wieltje were driven from their trenches, losing 18 officers and 431 men so badly gassed that they were admitted to hospital.

But when the battalion was stricken Private John Lynn was ready. Notorious for his cheerful contempt of danger—he had already won the D.C.M. for conspicuous bravery as a machine gunner on the Aisne in 1914—now, although almost overcome by the deadly fumes, John Lynn mounted his gun on the parapet and brought it into action with great effect against the enemy.

While men around him, choked and blinded, fell writh-

ing to the ground, this undaunted man, gasping for breath and frothing blood, stood alone in all the amazing majesty of the simple private soldier. Not one German set foot in the trench so nobly defended by John Lynn, who piled the enemy dead before his gun. When the Lancashire Fusiliers charged to recover the line regarded as lost, they found not the enemy, but one man, now sinking from exhaustion, still fighting from the parapet. He was borne to a shelter but, hearing that the enemy was again attacking, he made frantic efforts to regain his gun. Only the flesh was weak. Lynn stumbled and fell. The ghastly poison had done its work. The hero died, leaving behind him an imperishable memory, to which was attached the Victoria Cross.

### *Two Fusiliers*

And have we done with War at last?

Well, we've been lucky devils both,

And there's no need of pledge or oath

To bind our lovely friendship fast,  
By firmer stuff

Close bound enough.

By wire and wood and stake  
we're bound,

By Fricourt and by Festubert,  
By whipping rain, by the sun's glare,

By all the misery and loud sound,  
By a Spring day,  
By Picard clay.

Show me the two so closely bound  
As we, by the wet bond of blood,  
By friendship blossoming from mud,

By Death: we faced him, and  
we found

Beauty in Death,  
In dead men, breath.

ROBERT GRAVES.

### *The Battle of the Somme, 1916*

The battle of the Somme produced some of the hardest fighting in which the British army has ever been engaged. Many of the new "Kitchener Divisions," superbly trained and equipped, had joined the field army of old Regular battalions and batteries, before the Battle of Loos, September, 1915. The old Militia (Special Reserve) battalions had served to reinforce the 1914 army; and Territorial formations, infantry and yeomanry, had begun to come into the line at the same time. It is diffi-

cult to select tales from the magnificent material available.

"The Englishman still sits in Schwaben Redoubt. He must be driven out of it, out of our position. The attack is to be pushed with all energy. It is a point of honour for the division to recapture this important point to-day. The artillery is to co-operate with all possible strength." So ran the order of Major-General von Soden.

A few small parties of Ulstermen yet remained in the enemy stronghold. Without orders to retire, the undaunted Yorks remained. Among them was Corporal G. Sanders, typical of his breed, who with rifle and bomb, controlling a small group of his platoon, resisted every assault by the enemy. Isolated, without hope of succour, he was continually attacked from three sides and from the rear. His position became the mark of machine guns and mortars. He was sniped from all sides, while bombers crept up to his position to exterminate the tiny garrison. Nothing would shift him.

"The Englishman still sits in Schwaben Redoubt." Here he sat for three days, through long hours of desperate resistance, during each of which chance of relief, even of life, grew more faint. He was without food or water. His ammunition supply was German, unaccustomed to his hand. His companions were the dead,

veritably mountains of them, their presence made more horrible by the heat of mid-summer and the ghastly effect of shells which unceasingly mangled them anew. With incredible coolness and contempt of danger, Corporal Sanders then rallied the survivors in the redoubt and held on . . . in defiance of the orders of the German Divisional Commander. The enemy attempts to dislodge him were profligate of loss. Corporal Sanders must be "driven out of it, out of our position." But the Englishman still sat in Schwaben Redoubt. The survivors were never driven out; they were withdrawn on the 3rd of July; and Corporal Sanders received the Victoria Cross "for valour."

The award of the Victoria Cross had been instituted under Royal Warrant on January 29, 1856, ordained to "be highly prized and eagerly sought after" and "with a view to place all persons on a perfectly equal footing in relation to eligibility for the decoration, that neither rank, nor long service, nor wounds, nor any other circumstance or condition whatsoever, save the merit of conspicuous bravery shall be held to establish a sufficient claim to the honour."

Two weeks in September contribute three typical stories. Early in the day, the Guards Division was engaged in terrific fighting for their first objective, heading towards Les

Bœufs. The German official narrative describes this as "a very heavy day even according to Somme standards." Lieut.-Colonel J. V. Campbell, the senior officer of the 1st Guards Brigade, therefore reorganised it for a further attack. As the 2nd and 3rd Coldstream went forward, their ranks were smitten by a barrage of hurricane force and blizzard density. Rallying his men, Colonel Campbell led them on again to the sound of his hunting-horn. He, too, was awarded the V.C. for his gallant leadership. An instance, not dissimilar, demonstrating how love of sport animated British officers even in circumstances of extreme difficulty and peril, is revealed in the action of Lieut.-Colonel P. V. P. Stone, commanding the 1st Norfolks, on September 25, north of Combles. In this sector the British had established an ascendancy over the Germans and carried all their objectives, in the words of a senior Guards' officer, "like clockwork." Colonel Stone led his battalion in person, for which he received special permission on the grounds that his unit had been recently reinforced by three large drafts drawn from different regiments and the incomers had not settled down. At the head of this mixed body of troops, Colonel Stone rushed his objective, killing many Germans and capturing over a hundred. He was reported to have

"treated the attack as a pheasant shoot, with his servant as loader," and personally to have accounted for quite a number of the enemy.

*"Todger" Jones, V.C.*

One of the most astonishing stories of the Great War is that of Private T. A. Jones, of the 1st Cheshire Regiment. Private Jones went by the name of "Todger," and if he had not, the following amazing affair might never have happened. "Todger" Jones was a regimental institution, a wit who in bivouac or in billet might always be relied upon to provide amusing diversion from routine. There is no word in the English dictionary which remotely connects with "Todger," except perhaps one of ancient usage—*Toge*—which means "tough." But then the derivation of regimental nicknames is often obscure, buried deep in barrack-room history. If "tough" was the derivation, it well suits its purpose, but it may have meant "a man who goes slow" or refuses promotion. "Todger" Jones had yet to prove his gifts for entertainment upon the battlefield. He possessed also a reputation as a skilled marksman and a man of singular independence, who, if he disdained promotion, was ready to act on his own initiative.

On the same day as Colonel Stone was "having his bit of sport," "Todger" Jones was

having his. Within the XIVth Corps, the 1st Cheshires had captured Morval and, the German history records, practically annihilated the 239th Reserve Regiment, even to the bombing of the 3rd Battalion headquarters in its dugout in the village. The German losses on the 25th and 26th were reported to be the heaviest since the 1st July; and, on a frontage of nearly 2,000 yards, the corps had overrun its objectives. The summit of the ridge at Morval provides a striking view at any time, offering a wide and distant panorama of villages and spires. But on this day the sight was a "promised land." The downward slope to the east seemed to beckon to the victors to exploit the unknown, while the vanquished were hastening to remove their guns and persons from capture by the elated British troops.

The success of his battalion had whetted the appetite of "Todger" Jones for more. The humour of the situation seems to have struck him as one of which, granted a little liberty of action, he could take peculiar advantage, and thus establish his reputation in the front line on an equal basis with that already gained in billets. There being no one about to say him nay, "Todger" Jones advanced alone. He engaged a sniper, whom he killed. Things were going well. It was like a day of rough shooting. He went forward and bagged two more

Germans who bobbed up in his path with the object of bringing his enterprise to an unhappy end. He continued gloriously on his way until he entered a German reserve trench, in which were a number of deep dugouts. He peered into the first and, hearing sounds of voices, commanded the occupants to come forth and surrender. They came obediently to the orders of "Todger" Jones, and his surprise at their numbers must have been astonishing; but not to the beholders! As a true humorist, "Todger" Jones never laughed at his own jokes. He turned to several other similar dugouts, repeating the performance one after the other. Having concluded the day's sport by about 3.30 p.m., this extraordinary man marshalled his bag, as if he represented a complete battalion in himself, turned their faces to the west and, including several officers, marched over 100 German prisoners back through the British protective barrage to our own lines in Morval. For sheer audacity, this feat has few equals. The reputation of Private Thomas Alfred Jones was now established as a humorist beyond all possible dispute, and we may imagine that was all he cared about the matter. Needless to add, he was awarded the V.C. for his audacity. It is good to know also that in addition he won

the D.C.M. gained for another exploit, and remained a private soldier—most private, when one reflects on it—until the end of his service.

### *Tragedy and Farce*

Deaths in action which occurred on the Somme may be cited as examples of the stuff which went to the building of Britain's new armies. Lieut. Webber, a subaltern in the field, Master of Foxhounds at home, father of a dead subaltern, and himself three-score years old, fell with Captain Gerard Garvin, poet and essayist, just twenty years of age. Among the glorious youths who united all that is beautiful in the mind with all that is virile in the body, giving it unreservedly in their country's cause, were also Raymond Asquith, Rupert Brooke, Charles Lister, Julian Grenfell, A. D. Gillespie, Charles Sorley, Wyndham Tennant, Colwyn Philipps, Donald Hankey, Francis Ledwidge, Neil Primrose, some of the finest flower of British culture and valour. Once again, during the 1939-45 war, have they freely sacrificed to the need of the present their inheritance as gifted leaders of the future. One has only to look at the Roll of Honour of Winchester or Eton College to realise how much they have given.

In the early days of 1914, a straggler, unshaven and begrimed beyond words, stood

lighting his pipe in a railway siding as a trainload of reinforcements drew up. "Are we downhearted?" roared the troops from the windows, following the question with their own crashing reply of "NO!" The "old sweat" spat, jerked his thumb to the east, and shouted—"But you b—— soon will be!" Which tale recalls not only songs, but other things which kept the spirits up. Some refrains were sung with gladness, or just for the sake of singing something. *Pack up your Troubles in your Old Kit-bag* went well everywhere. The tune possessed a comfortable lilt, there was no stirring patriotism about it. Every unit possessed its variations on the song *We are Fred Karno's Army* (to the melody of *The Church's One Foundation*), with its last two lines:—

"Hoch! Hoch! Mein Gott!

What a very fine lot

Are the lads of the L.R.B."

—or whatever was the unit. The piece in the middle of the verse can be supplied *ad lib*. It was always profane and usually unprintable. Soldiers liked the sentimental ditties best, and would organise concerts in great barns rendered pleasantly hazy by clouds of tobacco smoke, themselves warm by contact with humanity. Then they would sing *Keep the Home Fires Burning*. Some lads would hold hands, their lower lips quivering, as they sang *Roses are Blooming*

*in Picardy* and other sentimental favourites.

In such an atmosphere the dark clouds would be turned inside out, though the boys might be destined never to return home. Men always sang the National Anthem with gusto, standing rigidly to attention. The rumour that the King was in France among his troops was like the passing of a magic wand over the spirits of his warriors. When they heard that his horse had reared and fallen on him, dread for his safety clutched their hearts. The Prince of Wales seemed ubiquitous, turning up on all kinds of astonishing occasions, stumbling up the trenches for a peep, "blowing in" to a dugout for a drink, pacing about in most unpleasant places, tin hat askew, and smoking a "gasper," making himself familiar with the lie of the land, with the men, and not least, with the absurd vocabulary.

### *Military Music*

Martial music and songs play so large a part in forming the background of military morale that it is strange that, excepting for *Lillibullero*, an Irish Catholic song in 1645, adopted with its own words by the Army in 1688, when James II was dethroned, the British army exhibited no taste for songs until the Great War. But military bands have for long been used both for cere-

monial' parades and sometimes in battle. The fife was formally introduced into the army in 1748; and regimental bands, with, however, only some six musicians, were then paid by the colonel and his officers. Both the Royal Artillery and cavalry went to war with kettle-drummers, usually negroes. In Highland regiments the piper always held an honoured and important position, and he was also a fighting man. His duties commenced at daybreak, when, "after doffing his bonnet to the rising sun (a relic of the ancient sun-worship) and repeating a short prayer, he roused the camp with the stirring notes of his *thiob mor* (great pipe)." At Dargai and at Loos pipers were awarded the V.C. for inspiring their comrades in action.

The average regimental military band now numbers some thirty different instruments, the training of bandmasters being carried out at Kneller Hall, Hounslow, established in 1857 and placed under War Office control ten years later.

The music of the massed bands of 3,000 performers at the Coronation Durbar, Delhi, 1911, was especially memorable.

Every regiment and corps has its own march, as for example *The Lincolnshire Poacher* and *The Men of Harlech*, of the Lincolnshire Regiment and South Wales Borderers respectively.

All Britain danced to the

*Valses of Dan Godfrey* (1831-1903), the famous bandmaster of the Grenadier Guards. There have been other famous bandmasters, among whom may be named Colonels Mackenzie Rogan of the Scots Guards and A. J. Stretton of the Royal Artillery, and Major F. J. Ricketts, who, as bandmaster of the 2nd A. & S. Highlanders has certainly secured immortality with such famous marches as *Colonel Bogey*, *The Thin Red Line*, *The Thunder of the Guns*, *The Mad Major* and *The Vanished Army*.

Thousands of boys have been recruited for the staff and regimental bands after training in the Duke of York's School, Dover, at Dunblane in Scotland, at the Gordon Boys' School, Woking, or at the Shaftesbury Homes. Musicians trained in the army have always found excellent opportunities in civil life.

### *England's Peerless Rifle Regiments*

The many acts of gallantry performed by arms other than infantry, and at Gallipoli, Salonika in Italy, Togoland, East Africa, Egypt, and Palestine, are by no means forgotten. But, writing in *The Times*, April 19, 1945, Field Marshal Lord Wavell observed: "The real front-line fighters, mounted or dismounted, are the men who should receive such panoply and glamour as are accorded to this dreary business

of war. The mounted men have always had it—prancing steeds, glittering uniforms, sabretaches, scimitars, dolmans, leopard skins and the like in the old days; the imposing clatter of tanks and smart black berets in the sterner days. But the infantryman who bears the danger, the dirt, and the discomfort has never enjoyed the same prestige."

Which regiments of the Line might be singled out for special mention? Each one of us would choose his own, that with which he has territorial affinities and associations. But there are two famous regiments recruited from throughout the land, The King's Royal Rifle Corps—"The 60th"—and The Rifle Brigade, known as "The Greenjackets." Among them, they share the battle honours of every war in our history. Among their officers have been Field Marshals Lord Grenfell; Sir Henry Wilson, Chief of the Im-

perial General Staff; and General Sir John Cowans, the most efficient Quartermaster-General during the Great War. The Headquarters of both regiments are in Winchester. This fine old town, unspoiled by any vulgarity, is the very heart of English history. Here, William of Wykeham, formerly Bishop of Winchester, and thereafter twice Lord Chancellor under Edward III and Richard II, built one of the finest cathedrals in the world and endowed education in the country by founding the college in 1382. Its "War Cloister," commemorating 500 boys of the school who fell in the Great War, possesses a sublimity unmatched by any other war memorial save that of Scotland in Edinburgh Castle. It is fitting, indeed, that in Winchester, the very shrine of English tradition, there should be the headquarters of England's peerless Rifle Regiments.

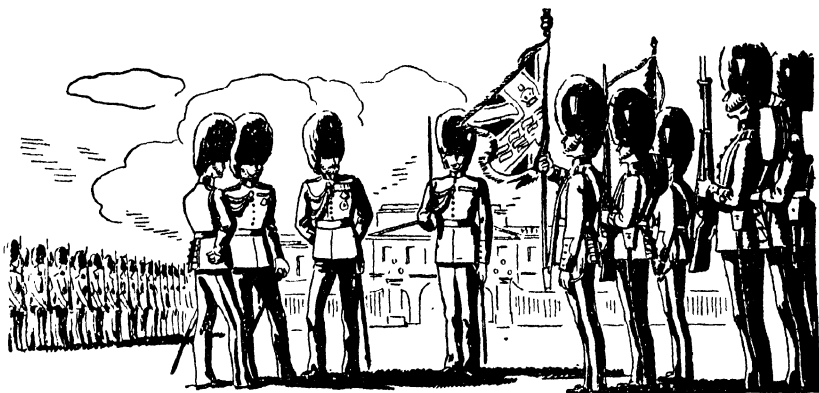
#### ENGLAND

Yes, I have loved thee in my errant way,  
Dear, dearest land : thy roses and thy trees,  
Hills, dales and streams, and farms and palaces,  
And birds that sing upon the branch of May;  
In love with love, I squandered many a day  
Seeking all joy—I took it as the bees  
Plunder the bloom—but for my golden ease :  
How little did I love thee till this day !

Now let me joy in tumult for thy sake,  
Suffer all things and walk the blinding fire,  
Prove true in strenuous deed my love and faith  
Beyond the fear of sorrow, wounds or death ;  
Unto thy brave, embattled soul aspire,  
My life as nothing, with thy life at stake.

ADRIAN BURY.





## *Command and Leadership*

### *Organisation of the Army*

FIELD SERVICE REGULATIONS (Vol. III), the War Office publication containing the principles governing the employment of the army, opens as follows on "The Nature of War":—

"A nation must protect interests vital to its security, and uphold international covenants to which it is a party. It may, therefore, either alone or with allies, have to impose its will upon another nation. It endeavours to achieve this aim by employing part or all of the means of persuasion at its command. These means include diplomacy, economic influence . . . and, in the last resort, the use of armed forces at sea, by land, and in the air . . . the ultimate national aim in war is to force the enemy

to abandon the purpose for which he resorted to arms and to conclude peace on satisfactory terms." Some account follows of the old citizen forces which, prior to the formation of a standing army, had served the national purpose, and which in later years were organised as auxiliaries and reserves to the regular army.

With the growth of the British Empire it became vitally necessary to develop the whole system of organisation, the method of control at the centre, and the means whereby efficient command should always be available and secured. It may seem to have been desirable first to have provided for the proper functioning of the controlling organisation at the centre in Whitehall; but the growth of the British army had

always been by regiments, as it were, on its perimeter, whether of the standing army or of the citizen forces, serving diverse purposes at home and overseas. It was only when other European nations made their bid for Imperial power in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, with Spain, Portugal, Holland and France as our most aggressive competitors, that the necessity for strategic direction and full control at the centre began to be apparent. These Powers were defeated in combined operations by the Royal Navy at sea and the British army on land. During the 19th and opening of the 20th century, Germany entered the lists, to be defeated in 1918; and, thereafter, Germany, Italy and Japan made a further bid for world domination in the Axis Alliance. To meet these growing dangers, Great Britain, in concert with her Dominions and Colonies, found it necessary to reorganise the armed forces throughout, and finally to set up a permanent Committee, working closely with the Cabinet, whose object was to keep constantly under review and to give effect to the principles cited above.

The sequence of development at the War Office and in military command followed the course, therefore, of building the organisation at the centre to serve the needs of the General Staff, of training and equipment, and of command.

In conjunction with the expansion, higher training in staff duties was one of the first considerations, and it was provided by the institution of the Staff College at Camberley about 1810 (reorganised in 1858) and of a parallel College at Quetta in India, opened in 1905.

Some time after the Great War, the Imperial Defence College was set up in London, with senior officers from the three services as instructors. Officers who have passed these Staff Colleges are always dignified by the letters p.s.c. or i.d.c. respectively after their names in the Army List. The process of development up to the Supreme Command in War follows therefore with this sequence of events in mind.

According to the dictionary an army "is a body of men organised, armed and trained for war." Throughout the ages the peoples of the world have recognised a civic duty in national defence. This implies not only the defence of land and property against invasion and capture, but also the defence of national culture and institutions against the imposition of others actually repugnant or merely alien to our traditional way of life. Deep-seated in every citizen is a regard and affection for his own national institutions. The people of Great Britain live under the shadow of a great

tradition. For centuries it has been slowly forming. Lives without number have been built into it. The years have crowned it with power and with beauty. It marks the rise and dominance of the human spirit. In defence of the cultural ideal in all its forms and of the liberty and institutions, founded upon the genius and frugality of our forefathers, men will fight even to the death. The British Army, together with the Royal Navy and the Royal Air Force, is the custodian of British culture and tradition.

As is observed in all our wars, excepting those of centuries ago, and more recently that of the Crimea and the two great European conflagrations between 1914 and 1945, the British army has served also as an armed police force for the suppression of tyranny and warlike tribes, and to restore those conditions in which peaceful commercial relations can be pursued. In these latter wars, the British army, grossly underpaid and often inadequately armed, was a mercenary service employed by the government of the day to impose its will, and the soldier's life and well-being was of little interest to the nation as a whole. For many years after Wellington, up till 1864, the state of the army, both in its command and administration, can only be said to have been chaotic; and it is a tribute to

the native characteristics of our soldiers and the fine fighting spirit of our regiments that the army achieved such great victories.

But, in 1864, Mr. (later Lord) Cardwell came to the War Office, which he completely reorganised. He also abolished the system by which officers purchased their commissions and promotions, and localised the military forces by dividing the British Isles into districts. The final figure was sixty-six districts, for the infantry, in each of which was established the regimental depot for training recruits; and for artillery the country was divided into twelve divisions. The Cardwell reforms certainly removed many absurd anomalies, and provided ground upon which Lord Haldane many years later could institute his great schemes of reorganisation, upon which the first national army of 1915 was built, serving the pattern for 1939. The British Empire had not only been defended, but held together by the army, linked with the other services. Yet, excepting during the two great wars with Germany, the mass of the people had not been interested in the army, unless to applaud the pageants of the Aldershot Tattoo or the Trooping of the Colour. "Pity the poor old soldier," was the echo of the Crimea; "Pass the hat for your credit's sake" of the South African War; and between 1918 and 1939 the

hero of war was to become the outcast of peace, and charity for the ex-Service man a national fetish.

*Cadets — O.T.C. — O.C.T.U. —  
Boy Soldiers*

In addition to the Militia and Territorial Force, there had always existed a considerable enthusiasm among boys and lads for military training. Their motives were various, including a delight in smart uniform and ceremonial, the joys of camping—for which facilities were provided by the War Office in days when a tent was a rare sight—and the sturdy comradeship provided. But among the motives patriotism was never absent. Cadet companies were formed in most public and many secondary schools, and there were others in our large cities, all of which were affiliated to a Territorial Battalion of the local regiment. Recognising the need for an educated source of supply of officers in an emergency, Haldane imparted an objective purpose to the Cadets, changing their title to that of Officers Training Corps, the senior division being that of the Universities, and the junior that of schoolboys. Efficiency certificates were issued as the result of inspection and test by visiting officers from the Regular Army, carrying qualifying marks for those who thereafter sought to enter the Military Colleges at Woolwich and Sand-

hurst, or who sometimes obtained commissions direct from the Universities. After 1939, however, it was agreed that experience in the ranks of the army is generally desirable, and those noted as possessing the qualities necessary to successful leadership were posted to Officer Cadet Training Units; and the Army Cadet force resumed its former rôle as a movement of good citizenship in which military training is the primary aim.

British boys have often played their part in battle. Charles II introduced a system of rewarding the good service of officers by giving commissions to their children. James Wolfe, the hero of Quebec, was only fourteen years old when he received his first commission, and the following year he received his baptism of fire at Dettingen as Assistant Adjutant of the 12th Foot (Suffolk Regiment). John Floyd at the age of twelve, as a cornet in the 15th Light Dragoons (later Hussars), fought at the Battle of Emsdorff, 1760, and was so small that a special sword and saddle were made for his use. His commanding officer wrote: "Our regiment performed wonders. Little Floyd . . . behaved most gallantly." At the end of the campaign the boy returned to school, to rejoin the army later. John Shipp enlisted at the age of ten in the 22nd (Cheshire)

Regiment in 1795 as a drummer. He greatly distinguished himself in service against the Kaffirs and in India, and later received his commission in the 25th (York & Lancaster) Regiment. At the age of sixteen, Henry Ellis, as a captain in the Royal Welch Fusiliers, took part in the Helder Expedition. He later commanded his regiment in the Peninsular campaign, being promoted colonel and awarded a K.C.B. for his outstanding services, but his promising career was cut short at Waterloo, where he was mortally wounded at the age of thirty-two.

Towards the end of the 18th century, in order to provide for large numbers of orphans, as the result of our casualties against the French and in India, three "experimental regiments"—the 22nd, 34th and 65th—were constituted. The Army Cadet movement may be said to have had its origin in these regiments. Writing in 1945, the Adjutant-General, Sir Ronald Adam, said: "Soldiers are also citizens. . . . I know that one of the aims of the Army Cadet Force is to make a more efficient citizen out of its Cadets. The best citizen makes the best soldier." The object of cadet training is "so to develop a manly spirit as to help him to bear fatigue, privation and danger cheerfully; to imbue him with a sense of honour; to give him confidence in his

superiors and comrades; to increase his powers of initiative, of self-confidence and of self-restraint; to train him to obey orders, or to act in the absence of orders for the advantage of his regiment under all conditions." It is most desirable that cadets "should be instructed in the deeds which have made the British army and regiments famous," and they should learn that the privileges they inherit as citizens of a great Empire can be sustained only by following in the footsteps of those who have best contributed, to its great traditions by their example and leadership.

It is not given to all to rise to the exalted places; and few, rather than many, are possessed of the necessary gifts. Yet many may capture some of the virtues and qualities by study, by application and by self-discipline. Lord Wavell placed "the quality of robustness above every other qualification for success." In military leadership, this quality takes the form of being able to stand up to the strain of constantly staking men's lives on great issues, in good time and in bad. With robustness, Wavell insists must go also the will to win, together with "a spirit of adventure," defined later as boldness. Wellington's decision to fight at Waterloo, and Clive's to fight at Plassey were examples of boldness. Some historians may feel that an

element of luck accompanied them ; but again Wavell writes, "A bold general may be lucky, but no general can be lucky unless he is bold." We are here thinking of generalship ; but there is a talisman of leadership to which even the youngest lance-corporal or bombardier must subscribe. In a nation which has given so much of leadership to the world, it is pre-eminently desirable that its rising generation should ponder upon the qualities necessary to individual fulfilment.

*. Laus Mortis*

Where Life, the Sower, stands,  
Scattering the ages from his  
    swinging hand

Thou waitest, Reaper alone,  
Until the multitudinous grain  
    hath grown ;

Scythe-bearer, when thy blade  
Harvests my flesh, let me be  
    unafraid !

FREDERICK L. KNOWLES.

Nature commands man to live that he shall serve ; nor does it matter to Nature that we live if we fail to serve her purpose. Leadership must therefore be possessed of those attributes which contribute to the nobility of man. There are good and bad leaders, the true and the false ; and often men will follow the latter because their path appears the easier and offers allurements which satisfy the flesh. These are not truly leaders at all.

Nothing worth having, by way of advancement, attainment, or prosperity, is reached by an easy road. There is no kind of genuine leadership which seeks always the pleasant path. On the contrary, the attainment of heights always implies the ardours of endurance, courage and sacrifice. Nature produces her heroes not to live but to serve.

Leadership implies thought, deliberation, foresight, judgment, decision, direction. A leader must be scrupulously loyal to his objectives, having no compromise with either evil or convention. He must be of invincible courage. He must prove himself inviolate and incorruptible and of unquenchable ardour. He must be temperate in all things, yet never the prude. He must be of inflexible determination ; yet he may yield to reason but never to prejudice. He must prove himself the focus of all endeavour, the centre from which all activities radiate, the foundation stone upon which the spirit of what he represents will be fashioned and built. He must be a visionary, yet must be practical. He must keep his objective ever before his eyes, upon a limitless horizon. He must make his goal that beyond all compare, above class, above creed, above personal ambition.

A leader must be ready and eager for every sacrifice which those entrusted to his charge

may make of his personal convenience and comfort. He must learn by continuous study to be a pastmaster of the technique of work. His heart must not govern his head nor sympathy his intellect; yet his spirit must outpour with overwhelming devotion. Of all virtues which a leader must thus embody in his own character, the last is assuredly the best; for if well and fully supported, a man possessed of ilimitable zeal—the willing will—surely must achieve success where all else may fail.

Something more is needed beyond energy, courage and character. There must be denial and faith. The former is an attribute of true greatness. Faith is the flame without which no great work can be accomplished. To cherish the ideal of race, to love our cultural inheritance, to take pride in our national achievements, to be ready to make sacrifices in order to sustain the things we value—these are properly defined as patriotism; and patriotism is the foundation of faith. Every one of us can make his contribution as guarantors of our national institutions.

A leader must also remember that prudence is of divine inspiration when others beside oneself are involved. Prudence is an attribute of the mind which foresees and measures the obstacle or danger, whatever it may be, in order to

overcome it. The duty of the soldier is to read the mind of the enemy, to watch for him, to discover his ruses, to take measures to counter his attacks, whatever their form. This is the duty, also, of all good citizens in times of peace as in war. It is for this purpose that habits of self-discipline must form the basis of all education and training. To resist physical and mental panic; to take reasonable decisions, not to be swayed by cries of alarm and despondency; to remain true to instinct; to suffer no weakness of the bond of comradeship; to conform to plan as does Nature herself; to suffer no division in the ranks; to bring the idealism of service and comradeship into the rough and tumble of everyday life—these habits must a leader instil into the spirits, minds and bodies of those entrusted to his charge.

We know from experience that certain persons, having the effrontery to nominate themselves as leaders, ridicule patriotism. Love of country is the one and only love for which man will forego wife and children, father and mother, fortune and friends; because the soil from which he sprang shapes body, mind and spirit. A threat to the motherland summons a vision of the eclipse of all that Nature through the ages has slowly fashioned. Then the felon is shriven by the one disinterested love of

country, and Nature commands him, as she does other men, to serve. For this reason no new international order can supersede nations. Quite the contrary: it must build upon them.

A leader must possess, also, a keen desire for action, a predilection (governed by reason) for contest and risk, a temerity and natural bent for responsibility, and, above all, faith. Heedlessness robs an act of bravery of every vestige of its worth; prudence gives it all its value. If prudence is conducive to sizing up difficulties, courage is necessary to defeat those difficulties, courage which is itself fortified by that interior force, character.

The man of character knows not the desire to please, he does not shine by superficial qualities which charm in happy hours. It is towards the leader that all turn in the hour of trouble. It may be thought, perhaps, that one must rise to demi-godhead to be a leader; to possess in plenitude such superlative qualities. This is not so. It will suffice to remain a man—a manly man—but a man devoted to an unsullied ideal—duty. Is this not, moreover, the very definition of a leader?

During the greatest struggle in which the British Empire has ever been engaged, the army has never been more fortunate in its leadership in

all ranks. Such names as Wavell, Alexander, Montgomery, would be outstanding if only because of their men's victories. But their many virtues, hammered on the anvil of regimental life, shaped on the staff and in subordinate commands, and refined in the crucible of active service, in each case producing a unique personality, serve to present the perfect soldier and the ideal citizen. One thinks also of men of lower rank, such as Lieut.-General Carton de Wiart, formerly of the 4th Dragoon Guards, twice wounded in South Africa in 1901, who left an eye in Somaliland in 1915, and lost a hand at Ypres, to reappear as a footslogger commanding the 8th Gloucestershires, and who, in a desperate fight on the Somme in 1916, pulled the safety-pins from Mills' bombs with his teeth and hurled them with his remaining hand, for which he received the V.C. Continuing, he was wounded eight times in the Great War. In 1939, he went to succour the Poles when invaded, and then led British troops in the desperate adventure in Norway. He was unfortunately captured by the Italians when his airplane crashed, and was held prisoner until Badoglio's capitulation. And no sooner was he free than he accepted an appointment in China, as adviser to General Chiang Kai-shek.

One remembers Major -



General Orde Wingate, who led what was perhaps the greatest adventure of the greatest of all wars, beyond the Chindwin in 1943; and we can call to mind hundreds of others, like Corporal Bates of London, who by their courageous example, personal initiative, and self-sacrifice were filled with the spirit of leadership. How better, also, is leadership demonstrated than by the noble tributes which Montgomery has always paid to his men of all ranks? Here is an excerpt from a letter from him to *The Times*, April 27, 1945, reflecting upon Major John Poston, the fifth of his A.D.Cs. to be killed in the war: "I trusted him absolutely and he never once failed me. I gave him my complete trust and confidence, and he would come to me with his own personal problems and troubles. He had been through this war from the beginning, and he saw the end approaching; the Promised Land was not so very far away, and he gave his life that others might enjoy it."

### *Command of the Army*

It may sometimes be doubted whether governments fully realise the power and influence of the British peoples, as exemplified by the army, in world affairs. The more we talk of peace, surely the more zealous should the nation be that the defenders of peace,

its representatives among subordinate and defenceless peoples, should consist of the flower of the race.

The command of the army was formerly vested in a Commander-in-Chief, of whom Lords Wolseley and Roberts were the last, though the title had been reduced to that of Commander only. The King, a Field Marshal, is the head of the British army. It is governed by the Army Council, of which the President is the Secretary of State for War, and the Vice-President, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary. The Finance Member is the Financial Secretary of the War Office, also a Member of Parliament. There are four Military Members, the Chief of the Imperial General Staff, the Adjutant-General to the Forces, the Quartermaster-General and the Master-General of Ordnance. There are six commands in the United Kingdom; and in India there is a Commander-in-Chief with four commands. In each Dominion, Colony and Protectorate there is also a Commander-in-Chief, which office, usually occupied by a civilian, is combined with that of the Governor-General or Governor, with certain exceptions, as in the case of Egypt and Iraq. Where, also, an army of occupation is employed, its own Commander-in-Chief is appointed. An important appointment in the War Office is that of the Permanent

Under-Secretary of State, in this succession the name of Sir Herbert Creedy is the most famous.

The defence of the realm in a wider sense falls naturally also within the province of the Privy Council, originally instituted by King Alfred in 895, when it discharged the functions of state now confined to members of the Cabinet. With the growth of British responsibilities throughout the world, the Committee of Imperial Defence was set up to work under the Privy Council, alongside which also was instituted the Cabinet Office. For many years the Clerk of the Council, and Joint Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence and the Cabinet Office, was Sir Maurice (now Lord) Hankey; and following his retirement, owing to the extended nature of the work, its Secretariats were divided.

#### *Winston Spencer Churchill*

In war, responsibility for all major decisions affecting its conduct, covering the whole field of strategy, alliances, supply and transport, command, and warlike operations, is vested in the War Cabinet, at the head of which is the Prime Minister. This system was originated by Mr. Lloyd George, and again adopted by the then Prime Minister at the outbreak of war in 1939. The War Cabinet under Lloyd George, though sometimes

stormy in its relationships with military commanders in the field and with our allies, gave purpose and direction to affairs. It was not until Mr. Winston Spencer Churchill was summoned to power in 1940 that the same dynamic purpose appeared in our conduct of the war.

Mr. Churchill brought to his office an unrivalled experience of having held the principal seals of office, including those of the War Office, the Admiralty, and Ministry for Air, to which were added his early training as a regular soldier; and participation in five campaigns and command of a battalion of the Royal Scots Fusiliers in 1916. He possessed also a very wide knowledge of the world and of strategic problems, unquenchable ardour, superb courage, and the most rare virtue of being able to inspire confidence and good comradeship among the heads of the great Powers and lesser States who were our allies. Without any doubt whatever, Mr. Churchill was the main architect of victory during the years between 1939 and 1941—when the British Empire stood alone—and the year of fulfilment in 1945. Without doubt, also, his earlier service in the British army contributed immeasurably to his strength of character.

Large as is the British army in wartime, it must always be remembered that a consider-

able part of the available manpower must be assigned for naval duties and for the Royal Air Force. During the Great War, with world-wide commitments, although we placed millions of men in the main theatre of war in France and Belgium, the French armies were superior in numbers, and we were fighting on French soil. It followed inevitably, both for military and political reasons, that a French generalissimo should be appointed to the Supreme Command. Difficult as was such a decision for General Sir Douglas Haig, he willingly accepted Marshal Foch as his chief, yet, when the moment came for striking back the German invader, the initiative and the success of arms lay with Haig and the British armies more than with any other. It was inevitable, also, after the U.S.A., with its overwhelming preponderance in manpower and resources, had declared war upon the Axis Powers, that the supreme com-

mand must pass to an American generalissimo.

Nothing is more creditable in the history of the British army than the manner in which the victorious and experienced Generals Alexander and Montgomery accordingly gave precedence to General Eisenhower and were his most loyal lieutenants throughout. Nor could any virtues better befit generalship than those exemplified by General Eisenhower himself. While exercising control and direction, he was the most self-effacing of men, and he was faultless in upholding the dignity and feats of arms of the British army. It is recorded that at Tunis, following the great allied victory, he stood at the saluting-base to witness the march-past of the troops. There first came American battalions, followed by the British Guards, marching with perfect precision as if at the Trooping of the Colour. Eisenhower turned to those about him and observed : "Who am I to command such men ?"



## *The Army of 1939-45*

Who supped with Hitler needed a long spoon! A scrap of paper from Munich had sent the British people back to their comfortable ease. But among our soldiers were those who appraised arson, loot, and murder at their proper price; men who, remembering 1914 when the British army was held in "contempt," had watched the Iron Fist beneath the velvet glove closing to strike down first Europe and then lazy, yet staunch, Britain before she roused herself from sleep.

Soldiers like Swinton, Martell and Lindsay, cried for armour, while others called for the close co-operation of the arms operating in the three dimensions of land, sea and air, knowing full well that a madman was already astride Europe, his henchmen pouring

out Panzer Divisions and ever more munitions from the arsenals of the Rhine, Silesia, and the Mittel Elbe. The inevitable war was launched when Hitler had captured the key to European strategy in Bohemia without a shot being fired. The British army, 400,000 men in all, went again to France, for eight months to be stretched on the Flanders' plain till the German legions, their appetite whetted with a cheap Polish victory, struck through Holland and then through the gateway of Sedan.

### *The Epic of Dunkirk and After*

With bayonets and bullets, British battalions, to whom had been vouchsafed no more than 69 infantry tanks Mark I, 82 cruiser tanks, and 997 light tanks, sought to stem the tide of German Panzer Divisions.

As a guardsman said: "We had been given nothing to open the German tanks!" With unavailing valour British soldiers died, as did the Rifles at Calais to a man. During a nine days' wonder, the ghost of the army led by Gort and Alexander clung to the beaches, whereon their sires once drove the Spanish galleons. It was said to be a miracle. But was the British army doing other than be true to its traditions? Were the men of our breed, who fought the battle of the skies, and the mariners, who repeatedly crossed "Death Alley," doing anything different from what their forbears had done? The British army had looked disaster in the face before, and never harboured doubt of ultimate victory. Three hundred thousand men were plucked from the jaws of death, to fight again. Nor, in the reckoning, was it any bad thing that they had left their equipment behind them.

Modern minds surged to the front. A new army was fashioned, its spirit patterned as of old. When Britain and her Empire stood alone, the army of 36,000 men under Wavell thrashed Graziani's Italian legions of 215,000 men on the sands of Libya; and 19,000 Imperial troops drove the proud Duke of Aosta with 200,000 Italians from the gorges and rocky crags of Abyssinia. One further disaster overtook us, when, driven

out of Burma, from Malaya into Singapore—on whose causeway the Argyll and Sutherland Highlanders again won imperishable fame—the army, its supplies cut off, outnumbered and out-gunned, was forced to capitulate to the Japanese. But with a line of communications half round the world! And thus, too, our convoys kept the army in being at Malta beneath the flail of Italian airmen, and round the Cape of Good Hope went British ships to bring supplies to our troops in North Africa when the Mediterranean had been closed by German "Stukas" (*Sturz Kampf*—dive bomb), Heinkels and Messerschmitts based on Crete.

The new British army was being built for victory, while the Panzer wolf-pack stripped the Russian steppes, and fools yelled for a "second front," reckoning not that it took more than a year to plan the landing in North Africa or the operations of D-Day. Perfect co-ordination between Army, Navy, and Air Force was the first need. So close was it to become that commanders were equally "at home" in all three; and the Army must have its own air arm for artillery spotting and reconnaissance, with its own pilots and observers, its own glider pilot regiment for airborne landings, and the R.A.F. its own regiment of ground troops to safeguard aerodromes and

facilitate their capture. The Royal Navy, too, constructed combat vessels, carrying landing craft and a complement of soldiers and airmen, so that amphibious warfare—which Britain has conducted since Plantagenet days—could be carried on as by a single mind, represented in fact in the Chiefs of Staff and in the planning staffs of the three services, each of whose representatives could estimate the technical hazards and the means to overcome them. The first fruit of this unification was to be found in Commandos, the corps of picked men from every regiment, whose exploits on the French coast, in the Mediterranean, in the Pacific, and on the coast of Norway, although so long half-veiled in secrecy, have thrilled the world.

### *Opening the Way to Victory*

Then first came the big punch at El Alamein for which Alexander and Montgomery together were responsible. To these two men, also, as victorious Field Marshals in the separate and vast Italian and North German campaigns, in April and early May, 1945, fell the largest haul of prisoners ever taken in the history of war, and with unconditional surrender to add to the glory of the events. El Alamein, the rebirth-place of the victorious 8th Army, led across Libya and Tripoli to Tunis, and to the junction with both Ameri-

can and French troops at the Mareth Line; across the sea with Dux—~~as~~ the new amphibious tanks were called—to complete one of the most original and dangerous invasions in history, and into Sicily, and thence to the mainland of Italy. Events passed so swiftly that it is as if to pause for breath to relate that during this period the air defence of Great Britain, under Fighter Command R.A.F., had been built up from amateurs by General Sir Frederick Pile. The anti-aircraft batteries were drawn for the most part from third-line Territorial Infantry regiments, among which the 3rd London Scottish made a notable contribution to the defence of London in its worst air raids.

The germ of an idea had developed. A fighting man, though a specialist, must be equal to the task of every arm; and the higher the scale in command, the more perfect must be the knowledge. Infantry must serve as gunners: and they did. Glider pilots would be but half-trained as "taxi drivers." They must first become soldiers, as well disciplined as the Guards—and so General "Boy" Browning, Grenadier Guardsman, made them—as efficient in combat and in the use of weapons as Commandos, and then they must learn the airman's trade. The adaptable material of a people, unused to regimenta-

tion and nursed in liberty, was as pliable as sculptor's clay in the hands of those who, having beaten the German enemy once at his own game, had the freedom of mind with its gift for improvisation, and the purpose—firmly based in an unshakable belief that the people of these islands “never know when they are beaten”—to knock him out, once and for all time. The most formidable Field Marshals of Germany and Italy—von Rundstedt, Rommel, Kesselring, Graziani, Badoglio—who had carried victory from the Pyrenees to the Volga, from the whole length of the sunny Mediterranean seaboard to the ice floes of North Cape, and across Northern Africa into Egypt, Abyssinia and Somaliland—were soundly beaten on the battlefields, primarily by the skill and fortitude of two British soldiers—Alexander and Montgomery—and by the courage, tenacity and example of British regiments.

#### *Establishment of the 1944-45 Army*

Strategic principles remain the same. Tactics are revolutionised. The new army could not even be trained until technical research had been completed, plant set up and weapons furnished. It took two years to set the complete machinery in motion, while Hitler overran Europe; as long to train the higher staffs,

largely at the Military College of Science. Then, to serve the requirements of a revolutionary technology, guided by Dr. H. L. Guy, F.R.S., our foremost mechanical engineer, the Army Council refashioned the whole army, forming also new regiments and corps to complete the force which was to play the lead in the liberation of the world from tyranny.

The infantry soldier, as always, is the mainspring of the battlefield. He still fights on foot, but mechanisation has overcome slow movement, enabling the footslogger to press home the successive blows delivered by armoured columns. “Embussing” saves time and space only for distances beyond seven miles. Then infantry can be transported 50 miles in twenty-four hours, arriving fit to fight at the end of the journey. The Bren carrier is the most important addition to equipment, enabling fire power to be carried quickly from one part of the battlefield to another, even under heavy enemy fire. Infantrymen have to be masters of their rifles, the light machine gun, the Tommy-gun, the anti-tank rifle, light mortars, the projection of smoke-screens, grenades, the use of the bayonet, and signal apparatus.

An infantry battalion consists of four rifle companies, each with its platoons, subdivided into sections, armed with rifles, tommy-guns and

**Brens.** The headquarter company consists of six platoons—anti-aircraft, 3-inch mortar, signal carrier, pioneer, administrative, intelligence. There are also machine guns and reconnaissance battalions. The infantry soldier has evolved from those who formed the squares at Waterloo and the "Thin Red Line" at Balaklava to a highly individualised warrior, a thinking being, skilled in the use of several arms and trained as an athlete.

Infantry divisions of 18,000 and armoured divisions of 15,000 men were reconstituted. To each division was allocated its field artillery of 72 guns, organised in 3 brigades, with self-propelled 25-prs. mounted in tanks; an anti-tank regiment and anti-aircraft artillery of 54 Bofors and 20 mm. guns towed and self-propelled. The Royal Ordnance Corps became responsible for Base stores, their protection being the first charge on A.A. resources, with Radiolocation and the R.A.F. as the watch-dogs. The Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers were established in 1941 as a separate corps, responsible for servicing and repairing all weapons and vehicles in the forward battle zones, the men often working with a spanner under machine gun fire. So successful did R.E.M.E. prove that in the great drive across Libya, Tripoli and Tunis over 70 per cent. of tank casualties were back in

action within 48 hours, an astonishing feat considering also that in this campaign many of the engines needed overhaul after 350 hours' running. One has to remember, too, that the tank cannot be considered as a perfect engineering job. It is a unit of mechanical improvisation, presenting every possibility of fault and breakdown. The speed of the advance was largely due to the efficiency of the R.E.M.E. Corps.

In an armoured division, consisting of 6 brigades, the Royal Tank Regiment (formerly the Tank Corps) operated 78 heavies, serving mostly with infantry; the Royal Armoured Regiment (formerly the Cavalry) operated 230 cruisers, the spearhead and breakthrough arm; and the Reconnaissance Regiment was served by 80 light tanks. There were continual changes in establishment, affecting tanks and armoured cars and the type of tank used, the main problems being to meet enemy evolution with superior fire-power, armour, and mobility while keeping standardised production working smoothly. "Churchills" and "Shermans" replaced out-of-date models, themselves to be superseded by the "Cromwell," while the Germans produced the "Tigers" with ever greater efficiency. The Army Air Corps, consisting of gunner officers, was born to provide observation for artillery.





Commandos, corresponding to German "Storm Troops," were recruited from men selected both for high intelligence and exceptional physical endurance, their tasks being to raid for intelligence and demolition purposes, and to lead assaults on beaches and across rivers. The men for the Glider Pilot Regiment were similarly selected from every regiment in the army. The first time the glider pilots were in action was in the landing on Sicily. The task set was one of peculiar difficulty, for the terrain is broken and mountainous and the landing was undertaken under cover of darkness. An especially distinguished feat, therefore, was the landing of a glider on a vital bridge at Syracuse for whose demolition the crew had been detailed. Landings on D-Day, at Arn-

hem, and when crossing the Rhine, were carried out in the teeth of terrific fire with almost the same precision that motor cars are parked for a Tattoo or race-meeting. Men for the Parachute Regiment, another novelty, first introduced by Russia and Germany, were also drawn from every regiment, being thereafter highly trained, not only in the art of jumping from aircraft but in map-reading, radio, demolitions, and in the use of several weapons. The airborne troops consisted of whole battalions and other formations earmarked as such. The work of the Royal Engineers was largely returned to its original rôle in the "Trayne" of Marlborough's wars, namely, bridging. Their functions included mine detection and removal and road-making, where high technical

skill was required. More than 10,000 men of the Corps of Royal Engineers were employed in bridging the Rhine immediately following the first successful assaults by boat; and the whole of the material was brought by road from the Antwerp base, itself under heavy air and V1 and V2 bombardment. Three Vickers Machine Gun Regiments survived from the Machine Gun Corps and later experiments: The Middlesex, Cheshire and Manchester Regiments.

A broad picture of the new army was, therefore, first the Army Group, such as that commanded by Montgomery, itself divided into armies and sub-divided into corps. These groupings varied in strength in accordance with the immediate tasks, and at the headquarters of armies and corps were special troops, Anti-Aircraft Artillery, Airborne units, R.A.O.C., Royal Corps of Signals, R.E., for particular operations and duties. The division—infantry and armoured—as in the Great War, was the highest permanent tactical unit whose composition has not varied. The Infantry Division, of three brigades, each of 3 battalions with heavy mortars and Vickers machine guns in addition, was based on the platoon with its Bren and Tommy guns, rifles and bombs. On the infantry, as always, fell the heaviest fighting tasks. Tanks and armour can capture

ground: only infantry can hold it. Only infantry can conduct street fighting, only infantry search through jungles and among mountain crags. All other arms and services have been established to enable and to further the infantry in battle. British infantry have never met their match.

The Allied drive from the beaches of Normandy—with the British army to bear the brunt of the fighting at Caen, Falaise, at the crossings of the Seine, in Holland, at Arnhem, and across the Rhine—is incomparable in all the annals of military history. No Huns of Attila charged so eagerly to the attack. No Paladins of Charlemagne so proudly carried the course of victory on their pennants. The troops of Marlborough at Malplaquet never harried the enemy as fiercely. Those of Napoleon at Austerlitz never so gloriously swept the enemy from the field. Nor were Suvarov and his Russian troops, conquering the Alpine peaks, so zealous in their quest for conquest: not the troops of Wellington at Waterloo, nor Lee at Gettysburg, nor von Moltke at Gravelotte: not the armies of Kitchener when they sent the Khalifa's hordes flying from the battlefield of Omdurman: not Haig nor Foch when they drove the invading Germans from the soil of France and Belgium. No warriors in all history so applied themselves to the business of victory

And, be it said, British troops had never previously faced an enemy so stubborn, so fanatical, so well equipped and so skilfully commanded.

The British army in the European War of 1939-45 proved itself incomparable in leadership, in morale, in organisation, and in equipment.

### *Morale*

One may think of the common purpose of a nation, of its racial origins, of its contribution towards the culture of the world, of the factors which contribute to its cohesion ; but one must always be conscious of the fact that though nationality is usually determined by common racial origin and language, sometimes by economic and political forces, it is the valley, the lake, the seaport with its surroundings, the moorland expanse, the city, the town, and the village, indeed the very configuration of land and quality of soil, which express through the people their varied characteristics.

To some men London, with its endless streets, its lights and sounds, its vast population and its throbbing industry, is home. To others it is anathema, or at most but a centre of entertainment and business and from which to escape. Some must view the windswept moors of Yorkshire or peer down into the lakes of Westmorland in order to experience that strange kinship with soil and stone and

tree and human habitation which men call home. Some must hear the quiet intonation of the church bells, others cries of the cricket and football fields. Some must hear the Welsh tongue spoken or the soft accents of Devonshire ; others must be able to murmur "O Caledonia ! stern and wild." Others picture the homely scene, or scent the sea. It is the same, always the same sentiment of soil which stirs man to his very depths.

It is for this that men of our stock have fought. From these loved scenes by some strange alchemy are distilled also the ideals which have inspired our warriors in the face of death. The time will never come when men born of these islands will become unmindful of their history and traditions and of the special qualities which by some Divine purpose Nature has contributed to their race, when they will forget the land of their birth and the vales and villages which bore their forefathers.

In its fine tribute to Field Marshal Montgomery after the gigantic capitulation of German troops to him on Lüneburg Plain in May, 1945, the Army Council telegraphed : "To your unerring leadership and to the skill and courage of your soldiers the gratitude of the nation is due. Never has Britain had such great need of her army : never has it served her better."



## *This was Their Greatest Hour*

IN September, 1939, it was said in Germany, and widely believed throughout the world, that the people of the British Isles were 'decadent'. Our enemies have always made the error, not only of underestimating, but of failing to understand our character. Nor, apparently, until VE Day had the world understood the full measure of our adaptability, the quality of British courage, and the spirit of sacrifice which animates the nation. From the vast panorama of the battlefield on which British soldiers have fought, and with the selection of but a few from the many records of gallantry and devotion to duty, this story of the British army is concluded with the citation of some incidents for which the V.C. was awarded, typical of what was contributed during more than five years of the hardest

fighting the world has ever known.

### *Dorset to Newcastle-upon-Tyne*

During an attack upon a strong enemy position on the enemy's airfield at Sidi Rezegh, on November 21, 1941, Rifleman John Beeley, The King's Royal Rifle Corps, a Dorset lad, found himself pinned down with the rest of the company to which he belonged, by heavy fire at point-blank range from the front and flank. The airfield being attacked provided no kind of cover. All except one officer had been killed or wounded, and many other men had become casualties. On his own initiative, this young man rose to his feet carrying a Bren gun, and rushed forward towards an enemy post which was armed with an anti-tank gun and both a heavy and light machine-gun. From a

range of 20 yards, he discharged a complete magazine at the post, killing or wounding all its defenders and silencing the guns. Beeley went to almost certain death in his brave attempt to carry the day. He set a glorious example for his comrades, but in the moment of success fell dead across his gun, hit in at least four places. His inspiration opened the way to a further advance and to the final attainment of the objective set, where 700 of the enemy were taken prisoner.

Adam Wakenshaw, from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, was a private in the Durham Light Infantry. On June 27, 1942, near Mersa Matruh, Wakenshaw was a member of the crew of a 2-pr. anti-tank gun, sited on a forward slope in front of the infantry position. Shortly after dawn the enemy attacked, bringing a tracked vehicle towing a light gun within range of the position. The British gun crew succeeded in putting a shot through the engine, immobilising the enemy's tractor vehicle. He brought, however, another mobile gun into action, and killed or seriously wounded the whole crew of the 2-pr. gun, silencing it. During the respite thus obtained, the enemy moved forward towards his damaged tractor in order to get the light gun in action against our infantry. Under intense mortar and artillery fire, Wakenshaw crawled to his gun. His left

arm had been blown off above the elbow, but he loaded and fired five more rounds, setting the tractor on fire and damaging the light gun. Another enemy round blew Wakenshaw away from the gun, again severely wounding him. He dragged himself back to his weapon, and placed another round in the breech. He was about to fire when a direct hit on the ammunition killed him and destroyed the gun. His body was found in the evening stretched out at the back of the breech-block beside the ammunition-box.

#### *Ireland to Lancashire*

One of the most stirring pictures of the war is that of General Alexander decorating Sergeant John Patrick Kenealley of the Irish Guards with the V.C. This splendid young man, regal in his composure, standing beside his Regimental Sergeant-Major, as grand a specimen as the Brigade of Guards in all its matchless history has ever produced, and greeted by his General, typifies the glorious band of fighting men who reduced the Axis power to ruins in North Africa.

The capture of the Bou feature, dominating the Tebourba mountains, was essential to the final assault of Tunis. On April 27, 1943, a Guards Brigade captured the heights, the Irish Guards being frequently counter-attacked by Germans in strength. On the

following day, observing a German company forming up to attack, Lance - Corporal Kenealley decided that this was the right moment to attack them himself.

Single-handed, he charged down the bare forward slope straight at the main enemy body, firing his Bren gun from the hip as he did so, breaking the enemy into disorder, after which he returned to the crest further to harass their retreat. Two days later, while on reconnaissance, he repeated this remarkable exploit, inflicting many casualties on a German company and frustrating its projected attack. He was noticed hopping from one fire position to another, carrying his gun in one hand and supporting himself on a Guardsman with the other. He had been wounded, but refused to give up his gun, continuing to fight all through the day with great courage, unfailing vigilance, and devotion to duty. His action played a considerable part in holding the key positions, influencing the whole course of the battle ; while his rapid appreciation of the situation and extraordinary gallantry in attacking single-handed a massed body of the enemy "was an achievement that can seldom have been equalled."

"Brilliant leadership beyond praise" is the official record of the action of Lieutenant Willward Clarke, The Loyal (North

Lancashire) Regiment, for his action at Guiriat El Atach on April 23, 1943: }In an attack on the Atach position, when his company had been almost wiped out, Clarke found himself the sole remaining officer of his company. Already wounded in the head, he gathered a composite platoon together and volunteered to attack the position again. Met by heavy fire from a machine gun post, Clarke manœuvred the platoon into position to give covering fire, and then tackled the post single-handed, killing or capturing the crew and knocking out the gun. Almost at once the platoon came under heavy fire from two more machine-gun posts. Again, having manœuvred his platoon into position, Clarke went forward alone, killing the gun crews or compelling them to surrender. He then ordered his platoon to the captured objective to consolidate. While thus at work, his men came under fire from two sniper posts. Without hesitating, Clarke again advanced alone to clear the opposition, but was killed outright within a few feet of the enemy.

#### *Scots and Grenadier Guards*

These bare recitations give no account of what men endured in this desert and mountain warfare. Scorching heat by day and biting winds by night, blinding sandstorms, torrential rain ; endless miles of

hard, glittering stony soil, broken only here and there by mimosa scrub; days of thirst in which a parched tongue clove to the palate and lips cracked; every particle of food uncovered, a magnet for myriads of flies; the struggle up rocky defiles as a target for well-concealed gunners and snipers; cover behind rocks so hot that they burned the flesh resting against them—this was as hard a campaign as British soldiers have ever been called upon to fight. The majority of our men, moreover, had never experienced any climate other than the mildness never long absent from our shores, and had been accustomed to the comforts of civilisation.

Let us see how Captain The Lord Lyell of the Scots Guards conducted himself. In April, 1943, while in Tunis, he was called on first to repel a German counter-attack, and then, under heavy fire, to seize a point. The heat was terrific, and the troops suffered much from shortage of water. By his energy and cheerfulness Lyell kept up the fighting spirit of his company; but managed also, through radio-telephony, which he worked himself from an exposed position, to bring effective artillery fire to bear on enemy tanks, vehicles and infantry. Later, in a general attack, his company was held up in the foothills by heavy fire from an 88-mm. gun and

a heavy machine-gun in separate pits. Realising that until this post was destroyed, the advance could not proceed, Lord Lyell collected the only four available men not pinned down by fire and led them to attack the post. A long way in advance of the others, he lobbed a hand-grenade into the machine-gun pit, destroying the crew. Three of his party of four were killed or wounded, the last man then getting down to give covering fire to Lyell, who had run straight on towards the gun pit. He was among the crew with the bayonet before they had time to fire more than one shot. He had slain a number of the enemy and silenced the guns before being overwhelmed and killed himself, enabling his company to advance and take its objective. His outstanding leadership and self-sacrifice enabled his company to carry out its task.

### *Bearding the Lion in his Den*

A great story of high adventure and unqualified daring is that of the attack carried out upon Field Marshal Rommel's Headquarters in North Africa on the 17th and 18th November, 1941. Lieutenant-Colonel G. C. D. Keyes, the Royal Scots Greys (R.A.C.) selected for himself the leadership of a detachment which was landed on the coast 250 miles behind the enemy line, with the object of breaking

into the German Afrika Korps Headquarters and killing Rommel, thus to deprive the enemy of a commander whose forcible leadership had become something of a legend. The attempt meant almost certain death to those taking part in it. Without guides and in pitch darkness, Keyes led his men through dangerous and precipitous country to Rommel's lair. An enforced last-minute change of plan left him with only one officer and one N.C.O. to deliver the assault on the Field Marshal's quarters. Crawling past the guards, Keyes boldly led his little party up to the door and demanded entrance. Unfortunately, it was impossible silently to overcome the sentry who opened the door. Realising the necessity for speed, Keyes stormed into the building and emptied his revolver into the first room, killing and wounding some members of Rommel's staff. Upon flinging open a second door, Keyes was mortally wounded and died within a few minutes. As ill-luck would have it, on this night Rommel himself was absent. Thus died, at the age of 24 years, a born leader of men, the only son of Admiral of the Fleet Lord Keyes, who himself, commanding the Dover Patrol, attained immortal fame by his direction of operations against Zeebrugge on St. George's Day, 1918.

The story of the fight for

the Anzio beachhead will remain as one of the grandest in our history. It was here that, in February, 1944, Major William Sidney of the Grenadier Guards—a kinsman by descent of the heroic Elizabethan Sir Philip Sidney, and now Lord de l'Isle and Dudley—held off repeated German attacks against a vital position during critical days.

When the enemy had penetrated the forward zone and were surging down the gully which was the key to the position, Sidney personally led an attack with tommy-gun and hand-grenades, and then established himself on the edge of the gully to beat off the enemy. They succeeded, however, in reaching a ditch twenty yards in front. Completely exposed, Sidney dashed forward to where he could engage the enemy at point-blank range with his tommy gun. He had run short of ammunition. Retaining two Guardsmen, he sent the remainder back for supplies. While they were absent, the enemy vigorously renewed the attack. A grenade struck Sidney in the face, bounced off and exploded, killing one Guardsman and wounding the second, and Sidney himself in the thigh. But he kept the enemy at bay until the ammunition party returned. Then he went to a cave to have his wound dressed, but before this could be done the enemy



attacked again. He returned to his post, engaging the Germans for another hour, by which time the battalion's position had been consolidated. Weak from loss of blood and barely able to walk, he could not be evacuated owing to the close proximity of the enemy, but his mere presence was an inspiration to all with whom he came in contact. In the face of great odds, and with "complete disregard for his personal safety of a most exceptional order," Sidney's gallantry had far-reaching consequences on the battle as a whole.

#### *Colonel and Corporal Victor Turner*

The Christian name of Victor for a soldier is suggestive. We will see, therefore, how Lieut.-Colonel Victor Buller Turner of the Rifle Brigade—whose brother gave his life in winning the V.C. as a subaltern at Loos in 1915, and a nephew of General Sir Redvers Buller, V.C.—and Corporal Hanson Victor Turner of the West Yorkshire Regiment lived up to their names. In the Western Desert in October, 1942, Colonel Turner led his battalion during the night across 4,000 yards of difficult country where he captured a German position and organised it for all-round defence. Between dawn and sundown the following day, unsupported and so isolated that replenishment

of ammunition was impossible, the battalion was attacked by no fewer than 90 German tanks advancing in successive waves. All of these were repulsed with a loss to the enemy of 35 tanks in flames and 20 more immobilised.

Wherever the fire was heaviest, there Colonel Turner was to be found. At one time, finding a solitary 6-pr. gun in action—the others having been knocked out—and manned only by another officer and a sergeant, Turner acted as loader and with these two men destroyed five enemy tanks. Although wounded in the head, he refused all aid till the last tank was destroyed. His personal gallantry and fine leadership resulted in the infliction of a severe defeat on the enemy tanks.

Corporal Victor Turner, at Ningthoukong in Burma, in early July, 1944, was holding a position as a section commander with a weak platoon, when a strong force of Japanese attacked with medium and light machine-guns. Creeping up a valley, the enemy were able to use grenades with deadly effect; and, having lost three out of four light machine-guns, the platoon was forced to retire. Withdrawing 40 yards, Turner reorganised his party, and for two hours repelled continuous Japanese attacks, while his party dwindled from casualties.

Finding that their costly

efforts failed to oust Turner's party, the Japanese attempted to outflank the position. It was then that he determined to take the initiative himself and to destroy the enemy. There were insufficient in his garrison to hold the position for a counter-attack ; so, boldly and fearlessly, he went forward alone, armed with all the hand-grenades he could carry. He used his grenades with devastating effect, and when his supply was exhausted went back for more, in all making five journeys under intense small-arms and grenade fire. On the sixth occasion, while throwing a grenade among a party of the enemy, he was killed ; but the number of enemy found stretched on the ground was ample evidence of the effect of his efforts. "He died on the battlefield in the spirit of supreme self-sacrifice."

### *With the Maquis*

In this same year a story of extraordinary heroism, almost unique ingenuity and red-hot daring, combined with icy calculation, was being slowly unfolded by Captain G. K. Millar, of the Rifle Brigade. Prior to the war, he had been a journalist, and was captured in the earlier part of the war, to be imprisoned in Italy, whence he escaped. On June 1 he was dropped by parachute near Dijon in France, to become one of "the Maquis." His was a story of training

ordinary workers and peasants, in constant danger, with little equipment—of spying, of hiding in sewers, of creeping silently across country at dead of night, of "cloak-and-dagger" disguises and false names, of a network of underground conspiracies, of blowing up railways and of secretly tapping out messages to be picked up at home. There were many others like Millar, taking their lives in their hands, some to be caught and shot as spies, some to be betrayed, others to give moral and physical sustenance to the men of the underground movements in France, Albania, Greece, Crète, and Yugoslavia, until these peasant workers' bands developed into organised armies harrying the enemy in the rear while our British and allied troops fought them in the front. With a D.S.O. and M.C., young Captain Millar survived to relate his amazing experiences.

### *Normandy*

Many youngsters, not yet twenty years of age, have won immortal fame in the British army. Of most, the tale of heroism remains untold unless dragged from them within the family circle. Many have fallen, and their story has died with them. The record of Corporal Sidney Bates, the Royal Norfolk Regiment, a typical Cockney from London, known to his intimates as "Basher Bates," is the very

epitome of the spirit of London at war.

During the Normandy fighting in August, 1944, the 10th S.S. Panzer Division, after a heavy preliminary bombardment, attacked the position of a battalion of the Norfolks. Bates was commanding a forward section of the left flank company, which suffered some casualties, so he decided to move the remnants of his section to a position from which he could better counter the enemy thrust. The German wedge grew still deeper, until some 50 to 60 of the staunchest troops of the Third Reich, supported by machine guns and mortars, had infiltrated to the area occupied by the section. The situation had become desperate. Thereupon, Corporal Bates seized a light machine gun and charged the enemy, firing from the hip, advancing through a hail of fire. Almost immediately he was wounded and fell to the ground. He recovered himself quickly and again advanced, spraying bullets from his gun as he went. His action was proving effective on the German machine gunners and riflemen. But he was hit again, this time being seriously and painfully wounded. Undaunted, he staggered again to his feet, continuing to fire, with the result that the Germans, nonplussed by their inability to check him, started to withdraw before him. He

was hit again by mortar bomb splinters, but continued to fire his weapon until his strength failed. His wounds proved fatal, but he did not die before the enemy had withdrawn and the situation on the Norfolks' front had been restored.

### *Italy*

Some of the hardest fighting of the whole war took place among the mountains encircling the city of Rome, where the strongly fortified positions, with Cassino as their fulcrum, offered their main defences in the Gustav and Adolf Hitler Lines. The Gustav Line had been assaulted many times by British and American troops, but was defended with the utmost tenacity.

During May, 1944, Fusilier Francis Jefferson, The Lancashire Fusiliers, was taking part with his battalion in an attack when an anti-tank obstacle held up some of our tanks, leaving the leading company of the Fusiliers to dig in on the hill without the support of either tanks or anti-tank guns. The Germans counter-attacked with infantry and two Mark IV tanks, which opened fire at short range and caused a number of casualties. As the enemy came on towards the partially dug trenches, Jefferson, entirely on his own initiative, seized a PIAT and, running forward alone under heavy fire, took up a position behind a hedge.

His field of vision was partially obscured ; so he came into the open and, standing under a hail of bullets, fired at the leading tank, now only twenty yards away, killing the whole crew and causing the tank to burst into flames. Jefferson reloaded his weapon and advanced on the second tank, which, however, withdrew before he could get within range. Jefferson's gallant act not only saved the lives of the men of his own company and caused many losses to the enemy, but also broke up the counter-attack with decisive results to subsequent operations. By the time Jefferson had secured the position by his single-handed bravery and initiative, our own tanks had arrived and had thrown back the enemy with heavy losses.

The Italian campaign did not secure as much limelight as that being waged simultaneously in North-Western Europe. During the long march from Messina to the Alps, battling nearly every yard of the way, our troops experienced fighting under almost every conceivable circumstance. There were beach landings and raids ; great manoeuvre battles in which armour played the leading part ; fierce struggles among precipitous heights ; the crossing of full-flooded rivers and rushing torrents ; parachute and airborne landings ; heavy street fighting

and the siege of fortresses ; temperatures which varied from icy blasts accompanied by deep snow to the semi-tropical heat of the Mediterranean summer. British soldiers showed also their extraordinary capacity as a binding and unifying factor, by uniting troops from the U.S.A., New Zealand, India, France, Poland, Brazil, and in the latter stages from Italy itself, in one solid phalanx under the command of Field Marshal Alexander.

#### *Airborne and Parachute Troops at Arnhem*

In Northern Europe, from D-Day, our airborne and parachute troops rendered magnificent assistance. The battle of Arnhem will always stand out as one in which British soldiers, facing great odds, displayed their highest qualities. During September, 1944, Major Robert Cain, The Northumberland Fusiliers, of the 1st Airborne Division, was commanding a rifle company. It was cut off from the rest of the battalion, and during six days was closely engaged with tanks, self-propelled guns, and infantry. The Germans made repeated attempts to break into the company's position by infiltration, and had they succeeded in doing so the whole situation of the airborne troops would have been jeopardised. A Tiger tank approached the area, and Major Cain was left alone to deal with it, armed

with a PIAT. Taking up a position screened by a house, he held his fire until the tank was only 20 yards away when he opened up. The Tiger immediately halted and turned its guns on him, shooting away a corner of the house. He was wounded by machine-gun bullets and falling masonry, but succeeding in immobilising the tank, and then supervised the bringing up of a 75-mm. howitzer, which completely destroyed it. Only then would he permit his wounds to be dressed.

Next morning, this officer drove off three more tanks, on each occasion leaving cover and taking up position on open ground with complete disregard for his personal safety. During the following days, Cain was everywhere that danger threatened, moving among his men and by his fearless example encouraging them to hold out. All this time he was suffering both from his wounds and from a perforated eardrum. After being continuously attacked and losing men during four further days, the Germans made a concerted effort to reduce Major Cain's position, using flame-throwers, self-propelled guns and infantry. By this time the last PIAT had been put out of action, and the only weapon available to meet this new onslaught was a light 2-in. mortar. By the skilful use of this weapon and the daring leadership of the

few men remaining, he completely demoralised the enemy who, following a furious engagement lasting more than three hours, withdrew in disorder. The official citation of his award of the V.C. records: "His powers of endurance and leadership were the admiration of all his fellow officers and stories of his valour were constantly being exchanged among the troops."

Lieutenant John Grayburn of the Parachute Regiment, Army Air Corps, was dropped on September 17, 1944, with the task of seizing and holding the bridge over the Lek at Arnhem. No more desperate and hazardous task has ever been asked of British soldiers. The northern end of the bridge was captured, and, early in the night, Grayburn was ordered to assault and capture the southern end with his platoon. As was to be expected, when he led his platoon on to the bridge the party was met by a hail of fire delivered from two 20-mm. quick-firing guns and the machine guns of an armoured car. Almost immediately, Grayburn was shot through the shoulder, a very painful, staggering, and nerve-shattering wound. The bridge offered no sort of cover, but with the greatest dash and bravery, Grayburn continued to press forward until the casualties became so heavy that success was seen to be impossible, and he was ordered

to retire. He directed the withdrawal personally, and was the last man to leave for comparative cover. His platoon was then ordered to occupy a house overlooking the bridge. The enemy made ceaseless attacks, using tanks, self-propelled guns, mortars, machine guns and infantry storming parties. Completely oblivious of danger, Grayburn moved among his men, inspiring them to the defence. Throughout two days and a night, due to Grayburn's valour and skill in organisation, all attacks were repulsed till the house was set on fire and had to be evacuated.

Taking command of elements of all arms, he re-formed them into a fighting force, and during the following night he organised a new defensive position covering the approaches to the bridge, screened by a series of fighting patrols which prevented the Germans gaining access to houses in the vicinity. Determined at all costs to thwart the British attack, the enemy brought up tanks, submitting Grayburn's position to such heavy fire that he was obliged to withdraw the remnants of his force farther north. Having gained a slight advantage, the enemy now attempted to lay demolition charges under the bridge. Grayburn at once organised and led a fighting patrol which, temporarily holding off the enemy, gave time for the fuses to be removed. In so

doing, he was again wounded, this time in the back. Finally, an enemy tank, against which there was no defence, approached so close that his position became untenable. He then fully exposed himself while directing the withdrawal of his men to the main defensive perimeter to which he had been ordered. That night he was killed. Throughout four days, short of food and without sleep, although in pain and weakened by his wounds, Grayburn had led his men with supreme gallantry and determination.

A German commentator, speaking of this battle said: "The British army fought like lions. Numerous groups who lost contact with the main body were without supplies or ammunition for five days. But they fought to the end with knives and revolvers." Another German description was: "The best soldiers we have met since the invasion started." The Commander of the First Airborne Division was Major-General Robert Urquhart, son of a doctor, who was commissioned in the Highland Light Infantry at the age of nineteen and had spent several years in India. There was a time when it seemed amusing to small minds to hold up the officers of the Army, described as "Blimps," as objects of ridicule and contempt, more especially if they had served in India. Urquhart was one

of "Monty's men," and served with the Eighth Army from El Alamein to Italy, being awarded the D.S.O. and Bar for his bravery and fine qualities of leadership, one citation remarking his coolness under fire, his "clear brain however tired" and his cheerful outward manner at all times. He was severely wounded in Italy, and after a few months at home was promoted and given command of the 1st Airborne Division. It was this Division which was entrusted with the task of capturing Arnhem and establishing the bridgehead.

The airborne troops had hoped to be relieved in about twenty-four hours. "We ourselves," said Urquhart, "thought we might hold on for three days." It was, in fact, nine days later that the Arnhem survivors, about one-third of their original strength, were ordered to leave their defensive perimeter and were ferried south across the Lek under cover of night. On the afternoon of the first day, Urquhart went to visit one of his brigadiers, when the Germans "were good enough to shoot up that area with mortar fire." Urquhart, one of his brigadiers, and a battalion were marooned, but stormed into the town of Arnhem, and became involved in street fighting. For thirty-six hours the General was cut off from his Divisional Headquarters. On the evening of

the third day, Urquhart started off to regain his command post, but was forced to hide all night in a loft "because a self-propelled gun decided to spend the night fifty yards from our front door." The Germans moved off at dawn, and Urquhart, having contacted a British battalion, "seized a jeep" and regained his headquarters. During the critical situation which developed, this big, powerfully built man at one time would be found carefully weighing up the position, sitting in a cellar, above which men were lined up at the barricaded windows for a last stand, at another walking in the shell-spattered wood by his H.Q., encouraging his men. His leadership of the "Men of Arnhem" set a crown at 44 years of age on his already good service and achievements on the battlefield. From first to last, the Arnhem venture was one of desperate hazard; and if it was not wholly successful, due in part at least to treachery by a Dutchman, its effect was to prove conclusively to the pick of the German Army that inspired British leadership and the courage and tenacity of British troops are invincible.

#### *The Nation's Due to the British Army*

Good discipline and a high standard of training, skill in the use of weapons, a strong, supple body schooled to with-

stand privation—these are essential to the make-up of a good soldier. But something more is necessary, summed up in the words a "high morale." This consists in courage, itself something more than mere bravery, for courage is the quality which endures, that inspires the individual man to acts such as those recited.

History records its stories of battles won by soldiers in spite of defective generalship; but the valour of troops alone has never produced a victorious campaign. Without good leadership, the best body of troops in the world will in the end suffer defeat. The British army has almost at all times in its history been not only well but superbly led. Generals have made mistakes, but no British general ever wantonly threw away the lives of his men, and losses always lie heavily upon the conscience. Due to good generalship, our losses in the great World conflict finally ending in August, 1945, were amazingly light.

The greater the advance of technical science, the more effectively can it devote its inventions and instruments to the service of the army, and the higher will be the demands it makes on the soldier who manipulates these technical aids. To-day and henceforward, skill is demanded equally in every branch of the service. Anyone who has the smallest idea what technical knowledge,

what numerous instruments, operated by carefully trained experts, what highly disciplined mental faculties are necessary in the modern army, must admit that these essential qualities cannot be taken for granted with men whose training has been brief and superficial, and that such men, pitted against a small number of practised technicians on the other side, are "cannon fodder" in the worst sense of the term. Destruction of the enemy's army, not destruction of the country, remains the supreme law of war, although at times it may have seemed otherwise. Material is superior to the living, mortal human mass, but it is not superior to the living and immortal human mind.

The British army, assembled from all the varieties of Englishmen, Scots, Welsh and Irishmen and from all grades of society, is a striking embodiment of national unity, and as such becomes one of the strongest ties in the structure of the State. Externally, it secures the stability of the State by its readiness to resist aggression and it is thus the expression of the State's resolve to assert itself. The army gives authority to the State's voice in the conflict of international interests; it emphasises the duty of the individual to subordinate himself to the whole, and it illustrates the responsibility of the individual for the whole. What



demand, therefore, should the army make of the State? Without hesitation, the answer comes—love of the 'British army.

To safeguard our heritage and to provide protection for the many millions of defenceless peoples within the British Empire, Great Britain must always provide an army. This country never stood higher in the councils of the world than it did at the close of the war in Europe on 8th May, 1945. Nor has the prestige of British arms ever been greater. To serve the necessities of our Empire, two different systems of Army recruitment to furnish two different forces are necessary. Men are required for the professional army, which for the most part will furnish our garrisons in the East and at strategic points throughout the world. Men are also required for the Army of Occupation in Germany and to be available to reinforce an international army in any country wherein a threat to general peace may arise and in which disorder may break out.

The Cardwell System which for more than sixty years has governed recruiting for and the disposition of the regiments and corps of the Regular Army, with its Reserves, no longer serves the requirements of our times. Briefly, the system was that of linked-battalions, with one abroad kept up to strength, one at home which in an

emergency could be brought up to strength from the regimental reserve, and a depot providing for the intake and training of recruits prior to posting first to the home battalion and thereafter to that abroad. Conscription revived the Militia, who were trained and served with regularly enlisted men. Side by side with the regular forces was the Territorial Army, available for mobilisation in a "state of emergency." Conscription must doubtless be continued for several years to come, if, indeed, it is not highly desirable that the principle of individual responsibility for the safety and welfare of the State should be recognised in the obligation of every young man to be trained to arms in one of the services. As time goes on, the numbers of conscripts required for the Militia will probably be reduced; and, possibly, the former English principle of recruiting by ballot may be re-introduced. Ordinarily, it would seem desirable that the Militia recruit should receive six months' preliminary training at a depot, with one year of service with a unit on the Continent of Europe or at home, in accordance with the needs of the Army.

Senior officers and N.C.Os. of the Militia force will doubtless be selected from the professional army. It is probable, also, that all commissions will be obtainable only after a short

period of service in the ranks. In order to supply a flow of officers through the Militia and to preserve continuity in leadership and administration, short-service commissions with a gratuity appear to be necessary. A very strong sentiment, based on ancient traditions, and which has contributed immeasurably to the fighting quality of British regiments, is contained in the old regimental titles and method of territorial recruiting. These should be preserved.

The soldier to-day is well fed and housed, with extended opportunities if he desires for marriage "on the strength." During his period of service he can attain to high competence as a craftsman and as a specialist in a trade. His education is continuous at the hands of the Army Education Corps, and before final discharge, if he desires it, the soldier receives a vocational training from experts to equip him for civil life. In no army in the world is the soldier so well cared for, though his pay has not compared favourably with that of some of his allies in the two recent European wars. If the nation truly loves its army, its service should be an enviable one, so that it may attract the best type of recruits to its professional ranks.

No career offers greater opportunities and more enjoyment for the right man than does ser-

vice in the Regular Army. Its good discipline, fine deportment, vigour, corporate sense, skill in a wide field of engineering, mechanics, and science set a national example. The British army is, indeed, the very spear-point of the nation, displaying its virtues throughout the world, and upholding its dignity among strange peoples with whom it is vital to our standards of life at home that we should enjoy the happiest relations. The heritage of the British army, with all its rich and enduring comradeships, has been slowly builded through the centuries by men, often ill-paid, uncared for, and at the end of long service forgotten. Yet they have left a great legacy to the younger and future generations. The British army is worthy of the best of Britain's sons.

When I would muse in boyhood

The wild green woods among,  
And nurse resolves and fancies  
Because the world was young,  
It was not foes to conquer,  
Nor sweethearts to be kind,  
But it was friends to die for  
That I would seek and find.

I sought them far and found them,  
The sure, the straight, the brave,  
The hearts I lost my own to,  
The souls I could not save.

They braced their belts about  
them,

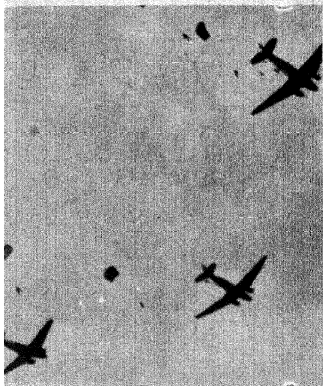
They crossed in ships the sea,  
They sought and found six feet  
of ground,

And there they died for me.

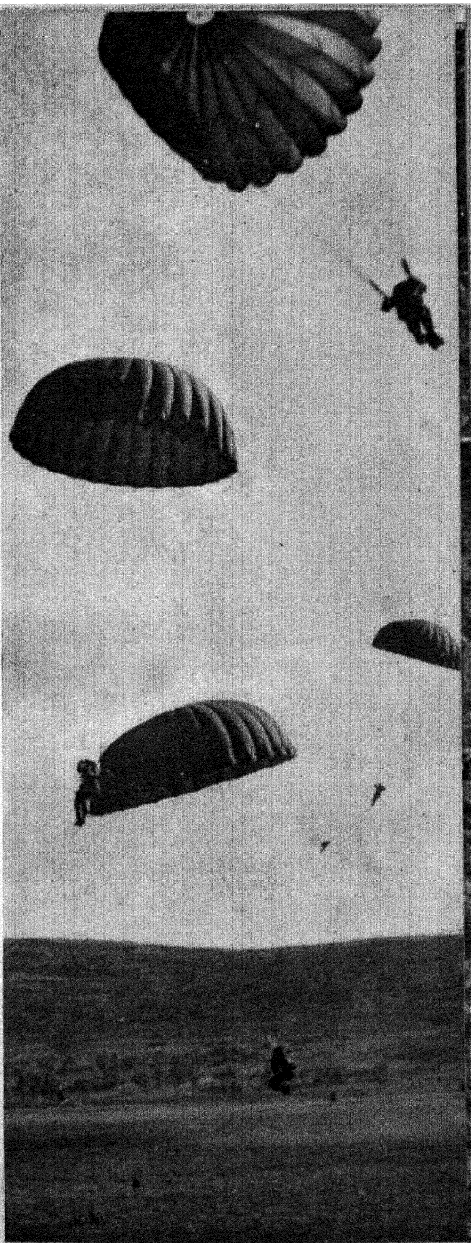
A. E. HOUSMAN.

GOD SAVE THE KING

## THE ARMY IN THE AIR



*Airborne men and paratroopers have made history. The complete task force is carried and dropped by parachute or landed in gliders. Of their battle actions, the stubborn eight days' fight at Arnhem, in September, 1944, is probably the most famous.*



## THE TOUGHEST JOBS FALL ON THE INFANTRY

*Throughout all history the footsloggers have had to bear the brunt of the fighting. In Normandy, after breaking through the Atlantic Wall—claimed by the Germans to be impregnable—British Infantry are here seen building up the firing line with rifle and machine-gun. Grim hand-to-hand fighting followed in the decisive battle for Caen.*







## BRITISH SOLDIERS MASTER THE SEAS

*Britain's European wars have always implied an overseas Expeditionary Force. The war of 1939-45 showed remarkable developments in amphibian methods. Special craft were designed to transport and land an army on wheels. Prefabricated docks, known as "Mulberries," replaced ports bombed to extinction on hostile shores. The army took like "ducks" to water. In loading seacraft, the vital consideration is that the soldier shall have everything at hand to overcome resistance and rapidly build up a bridge head on the captured beach.*





*Commandos led the way in landing operations with many thrilling raids, to be followed by such larger expeditions as Dieppe and St. Nazaire. There followed the vast enterprises of the North Africa landing, of Sicily, Salerno, Normandy, and the passage of the Rhine ; these were our greatest amphibian victories.*



**FIELD MARSHAL SIR  
BERNARD MONTGOMERY,  
G.C.B., D.S.O.**

*From El Alamein in Egypt, across Libya, Tripoli and Tunis, into Sicily and Italy, Montgomery led the 8th Army in a progression of dazzling victories. Called to be the senior land commander for the European invasion by Anglo-American forces, Montgomery achieved a crushing victory on the Normandy beaches, from which, commanding the XXI Army Group, he pursued the German armies across the Rhine to Lüneburg Heath, where he forced more than a million men to unconditional surrender in the largest capitulation in history.*

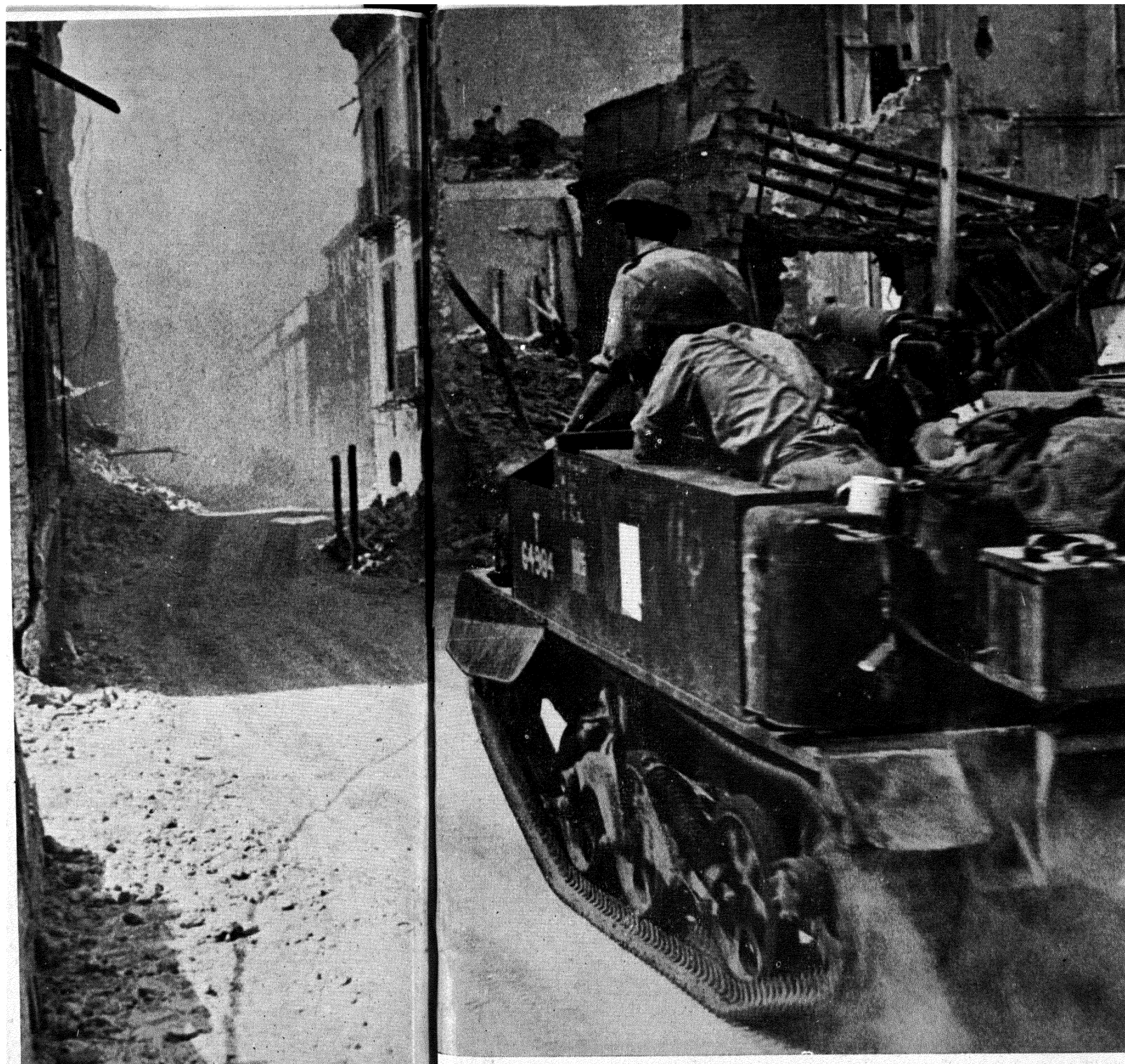
*Directing the battle in northern Germany, Montgomery is seen briefing his hand-picked team of liaison officers, responsible for keeping contact with divisions in action.*



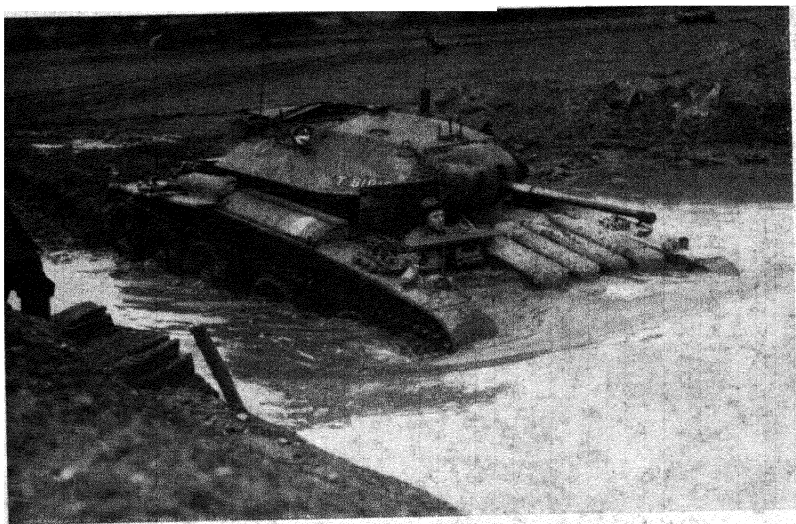


**THE BREN CARRIER  
LEADS THROUGH  
BOMBED SALERNO**

*The Salerno landing was one of the most dangerous and difficult combined operations in history. In the teeth of fierce opposition and furious counter-attacks, British troops both held and enlarged their beach head. The ubiquitous Infantry carrier again proved its worth. The German defeat at Salerno showed that the Italian campaign was already won by Field Marshal Alexander.*







*Mobile armour became the decisive weapon of land warfare. The monster above surges through a water drift. The "flail tank" depicted below was produced to deal with the menace of land mines. Whirling chain.. hammers the terrain fronting the tank's track, exploding enemy mines.*









